

LITTLE MERCHANTS, BIG HEADACHES

by FRANK J. WALLACE

NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 29, 1942

15c

in Canada 20c

**A SOVIET WOMAN GUERRILLA
WRITES TO RUTH McKENNEY**

WHAT ABOUT OUR COLLEGES?

by THE EDITORS

MR. WILSON OF THE WPB

by BRUCE MINTON

I MET STALIN BY ANNA LOUISE STRONG

BETWEEN OURSELVES

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

THE Christmas season has arrived with a dizzily dropping thermometer. Red noses and ears are being worn in the best circles. Shopping around for gifts for our enormous NM family, we found the stores apparently still full of the things people want, with emphasis on the military.

Emphasis on the military, eh? Yes, it's a cold Christmas on the Don, but the spirit of man's brotherhood, symbolized by the season, is truly on the march these days—at Stalingrad, in Tunis and at Buna, on the Yangtse-kiang and in Burma, in New Guinea, and in the skies over occupied Europe.

We ask you to give more than a thought this Christmas Eve to the men and women who can't be with us this time, sharing the warmth of the hearth, the mulled wine, the cookies—or the scotch and soda. They are the people who will preserve Christmas for us for all time; the men in the lines; the women on the ambulances; the production workers on the night shift; the wives who are taking their men's place.

We thank you all for the many greetings arriving in this office as this is written; we can't answer them all individually—so we try to answer them here. And there's a special message for you, good for any season, in Joseph North's first column on page 19, "I Give You My Word. . . ." Editor North's column will appear every other week, alternating with Richard O. Boyer's "If This Be Reason. . . ."

To NM readers at home or abroad; to friends in the factories or the foxholes Tunisia—a warm Christmas to you all, cold comfort for the fascists!

PAUL ROBESON

The NM contributing editor whose picture appears here is known by his voice all over the world. He can stand up in a



Hugo Gellert

darkened hall and speak, and there won't be a person in the hall who doesn't know he's listening to the voice of one of America's great people's artists.

Paul Robeson was born in Princeton, N. J., forty-four years ago last April. Educated at Rutgers, where he was a four-letter man and All-American football end, Paul moved on to Columbia Law School, where he got his LLD in 1923. But the law did not attract him further. Glèe club and debating team star, he gravitated to the public platform he has occupied ever since.

Everywhere in the world Paul Robeson has moved to the applause, the love, the admiration of the people—in England, in the Soviet Union, in Spain, and China, his voice has been heard; his common humanity is welded to the common humanity of the masses.

VITAL STATISTICS

The staff of NM has been augmented by two new contributors—contributors by proxy for the moment, but contributors nevertheless. Both will contribute much to the happiness of their respective parents; to the magazine (by extension), to the world in time.

Item: to Ruth McKenney and Bruce Min-

ton, one girl, 7½ lbs., named Eileen.

Item: to Janet and Samuel Sillen, one boy,
9 lbs., 3 oz., named Robert.

WHAT'S WHAT

Next on your program of entertainment and enlightenment for the holiday season is NM's Costume Ball on New Year's Eve at Webster Hall. You can indulge that lifelong desire to dress as Sir Henry Morgan (pirate) or Marguerite (Faust's Marguerite, of course).

You'll want to spend Sunday afternoon, January 17, at the Hotel Claridge, listening to Sam Don, Joseph Selly, and our own A. B. Magil discuss "Planning for Victory" at the second NM lecture forum. (It starts at 2:30.)

Earl Robinson has written *Song for Free Men* that will receive its premiere performance as the finale of "Order of the Day," musical cavalcade to be presented at the Lenin Memorial Meeting on January 11. (Lyrics by Millard Lampel.) More on this next week.

CORRECTION: Harry F. Ward writes us that a misprint in the typescript of his review (December 15 issue) of Earl Browder's *Victory—and After* distorted the meaning of one sentence. The sentence should have read: "This requires complete rejection of 'politics-as-usual'—that is, politics for party profit—and for bi-partisan action, by organized labor, the organized farmers, and other voters."

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ESTABLISHED 1911

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THIS WEEK

December 29, 194.

NEW MASSES SPOTLIGHT

Editorial Comment	3
Guest Editorial Albert Deutsch.....	9
Mr. Wilson Goes to Town Bruce Minton.....	10
Factories for Latin America Martin T. Brown.....	12
Gropper's Cartoon	13
Alexandra Writes a Letter.....	14
Little Merchants, Big Headaches Frank T. Wallace.....	16
Thoughts on a Sunday Morning Joseph North.....	19
I Met Stalin Anna Louise Strong.....	20
Stalin: A Drawing Hugo Gellert.....	21

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Ships Sail On	Sally Alford.....	23
Tenjo's Japan	Alan Benoit.....	24
Conquistador	Samuel Putnam	24
Poems Against Hitler	Joy Davidman.....	25

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

A Night at the Opera	Paul Rosas.....	28
Battered Formulas	Joy Davidman.....	29
Weep for the Willow	Alvah Bessie.....	31

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SPOTLIGHT

Xmas Cheer

BIRTHDAY GIFT:

Rolling fast and furiously, the Red Army crashed into its third offensive last week along the bloody Don between Voronezh and Stalingrad. It began a few days before Stalin's sixty-third birthday and carries in its fierceness the mutual zeal and devotion between the Premier and his troops.



The offensive, at the moment we go to press, is approaching the important railway junction at Millerovo on the Moscow-Rostov line. More than 300 villages have been liberated and thousands of Nazis will never utter another heil. By advancing to Kantemirovka the Russians will dominate the ground between the Don and the Donets and in time strangle the Germans in the Stalingrad area and isolate the Nazi divisions in the Caucasus. Despite strongly fortified positions, the Germans are being squeezed on a narrowing terrain and their possibilities of counter-attacking become more and more limited.

ON THE central front the Russians are moving along and have captured strong points west of Rzhev. The past seven days on the Eastern Front must have found Hitler screaming for the scalp of another general. Zeitzler, the newly appointed chief of the general staff, was supposed to outwit and outmatch Timoshenko. We wouldn't be surprised if Zeitzler now moves into the ranks of the dismissed Halder and von Brauchitsch. And the moment was never riper for the Allies to begin marching into Europe for the final coup.

Thunder in Burma



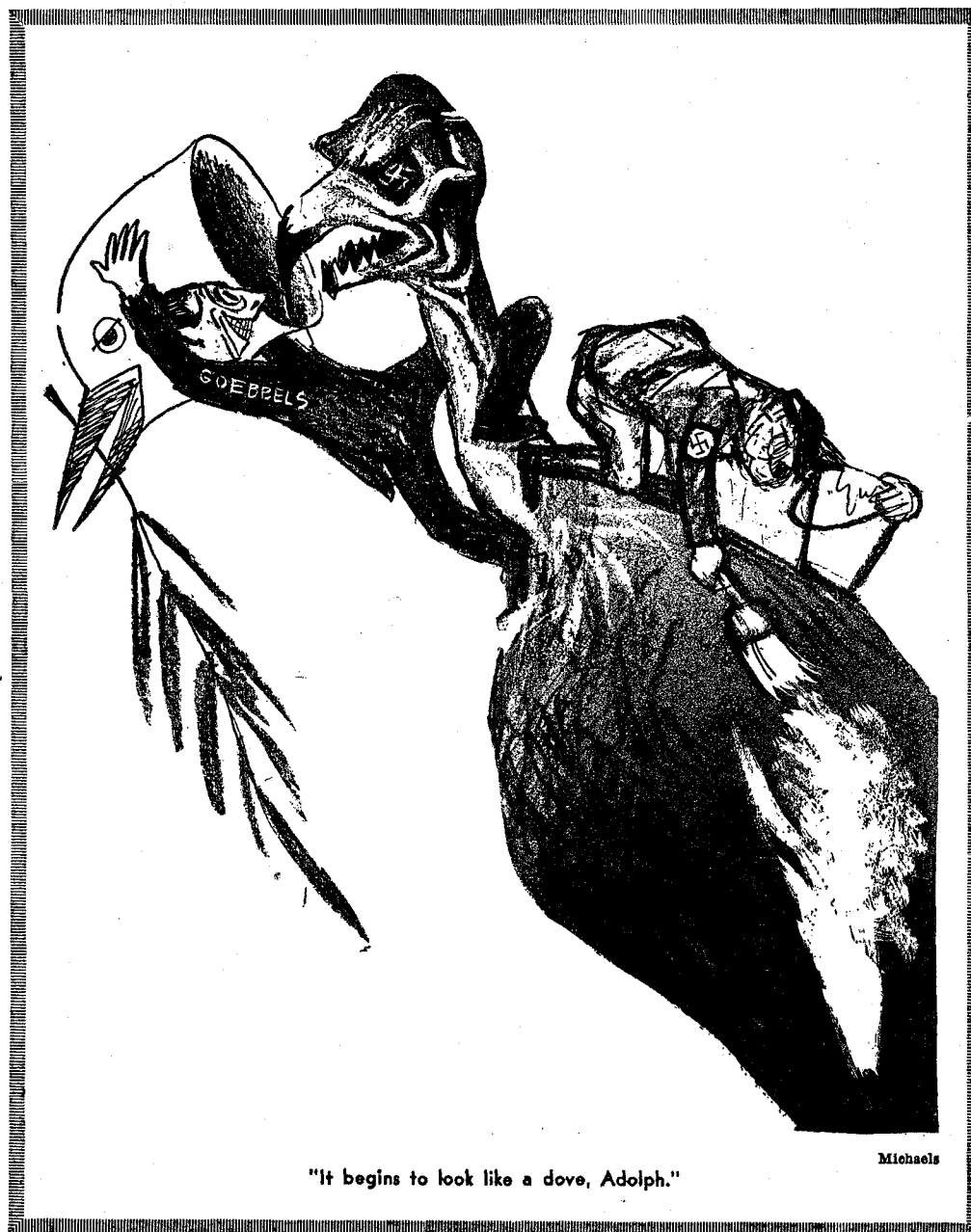
THE news of the invasion of Burma's western coastal plain by a British force is welcome to everybody who has been waiting for an offensive that will relieve China's desperate situation. There is as yet no evidence that the drive toward Akyab constitutes the beginning of a major offensive; it may be simply an offensive-defensive action de-

signed to forestall a Japanese attack into India itself. Nevertheless it is heartening to learn that the grand strategy of the global war calls for positive action in Asia at the same time that a decisive campaign against Hitler is being pushed in the approaches to Europe.

THE loss of Burma was probably the most severe blow China has received in its valiant five-and-a-half-year war against Japan. It temporarily reduced China as the land base for operations against our joint enemy to an area in which defensive operations with rapidly diminishing supplies were the only strategy possible. Not only was

the Burma road closed, but the construction of other avenues of approach for which preparations had been made was cancelled out. The gasoline of Burma, moreover, was lost to the United Nations air forces. And perhaps most important, the Chinese people became physically isolated just when their potential allies had finally made up their minds to give them real assistance.

The early recapture of Burma will do more than open a supply route to the sorely pressed Chinese armies. It will restore China's confidence in her allies. For Burma cannot be reconquered in the near future without genuine and complete cooperation between the Anglo-American and Chinese



"It begins to look like a dove, Adolph."

Michaelis

commands. If the former persist in their earlier policy of refusing Chinese aid—indeed if they refuse to undertake the real Burma offensive until it can be undertaken entirely by Anglo-American forces—the cost will be measured in additional time, additional tens of thousands of lives, and by increasingly strained relations with the heroic Chinese people.

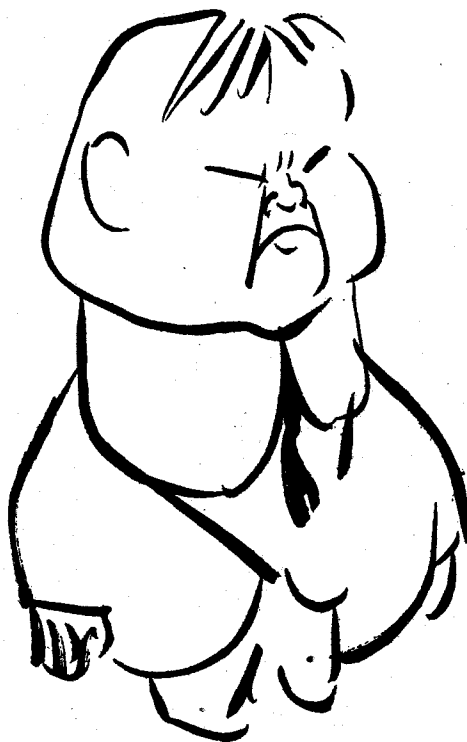
Diagnosis and Cure

WHEN the devil sprouts angels' wings, beware. Flying high, with a halo of pretty words, Monsieur Darlan in a statement and interview last week was induced to disavow both his record and intentions. And hypocrisy, born of long association with hypocrites, carried the day. Speaking to an Associated Press correspondent, Darlan insisted that his participation in the Vichy Cabinet was for the purpose of resisting complete Nazi domination over France. "No Frenchman worth that name, and I, in the first place, could willingly submit to German oppression." This from the mouth of a man who initiated the hangman's justice which condemned to death thousands of patriotic anti-fascist Frenchmen; who cleared the way for the importation of French slave labor into Germany!

In his speech Darlan also emphasized that he had taken measures to abrogate anti-Semitic laws in North Africa which "resulted from laws passed in France under German pressure." (Laws which, of course, Darlan helped enact.) But no sooner had his words been uttered than the monitor of the Federal Communications Commission reported that the radio in Morocco was broadcasting anti-Semitic and anti-democratic propaganda. "Our fight," said the radio at Rabat, "is not of the Jews and the liberals. . . . Some persons will tell you that we are fighting for the democracies, but we hope that an aristocracy will develop in France as a result of this war."

WHAT credence can be placed in a man whose words are contradicted by deeds a moment later? Darlan has made a double promise—that he will bow out of the scene the moment France is free, and that the French people themselves shall decide their own destiny. Belief in such statements would reveal a political innocence worthy only of babes. Darlan is firmly entrenched politically in North Africa and even if he does remove himself in the future he has already appointed to decisive positions officials whose politics are his own, and whose army is stippled with fascists of the Doriot stripe. Cooperation with Darlan has created suspicion among the Allies, and in occupied Europe, the deepest resentment. It has also encouraged those

quarters who believe that the Darlan precedent can be used again elsewhere. It gives substance to the theory that victory can be bought cheaply and without battle. And it may not be far fetched to think that such ideas in part explain the slowness with which Allied armies have moved in Tunisia. Darlanism is a kind of pathological politics to be cured not by charms but by surgery. The alternative is to run the risk of a plague whose ravages are without limit.



Doubletalk

THE Great Engineer, having completed his brilliant Hooverville projects, now undertakes to blueprint the mechanics of peacemaking. Such programs when formulated by the less wily are convenient means of evading the grim present and its immediate political issues. In the case of Hoover they provide a way of talking through both corners of the mouth simultaneously. From one corner he is again the incomparable administrator ready to solve the problems troubling a world at war; from the other he is promulgating policy to guide the boys who have been forced temporarily into a back seat—a policy whose vague phrases cannot be easily identifiable as comforting the enemy.

Mr. Hoover's words, when the camouflage is removed, reveal a deadly fear that the peoples of the world have taken to heart the third plank of the Atlantic Charter—the right to self-determination and the restoration of sovereignty to conquered nations. If his teeth chatter at the thought of a stabilized Europe and Asia completely in the hands of their populace, the "cooling off" stage he proposes after a "conditional peace" will prepare the way for those forces

of repression who can rule according to Hoover concepts.

BUT what Hoover passed out in his speech last week are the tastier morsels made from the same pot of poison whose recipe is carefully described in his book *The Problems of Lasting Peace*. There he attacked by innuendo the Allied coalition and the promise it gives for victory and an enduring peace. Early in the book he and his collaborator Hugh Gibson, former ambassador to Belgium, have this to say: "In the first place, we must recognize that our allies in this war—Britain, Russia, China, and the others—will look upon the problem of peace through different eyes." And later in the book they write "Communism and fascism are both founded on sheer materialism. They are both intensively militaristic and imperialistic. They both ruthlessly oppose intellectual and spiritual freedom. . . . There is less murder and liquidation under fascism, but the moral base is no higher."

With this pivot of Hoover's thinking in mind it becomes immediately clear what is behind the hazy generalities of his speech. His "conditional peace" idea linked to a period of "cooling off" is the machinery by which he hopes to destroy the United Nations at a later moment—a moment when the coalition will have fulfilled its military obligations and turns to the obligations of peace. The "cooling off" period is the "American Firsters'" refrigerator in which to freeze the ardor of the United Nations for continued collaboration with the Soviet Union, should it become impossible now to swing a negotiated peace such as Hugh Gibson, Hoover's partner in appeasement, suggested only a few weeks ago. The Hoover perspectives, then, are: continued intrigue against the USSR under the guise of a so-called machinery for peace; sowing distrust among the Allies by holding up the old picture of Versailles; and diverting attention from those military necessities without which victory is impossible.

Tin from Bolivia

ONE does not have to read the radio transcriptions of the FCC monitoring service to know that the Axis is triumphantly predicting a complete stoppage of tin mining in Bolivia because of the mine owners' refusal to increase wages above starvation level. Inhuman exploitation on the part of the Patino, Hochschild, and Arramayo interests continues in spite of the fact that the US Metal Reserves Corp. has raised the price paid for tin from 48½¢ delivered in New Orleans to sixty cents delivered in Chilean ports, retroactive to January 1 of this year. The United Nations' chief source of this strategically vital material is now threatened by what can

only be described as sabotage on the part of the owners.

The first comprehensive report on the situation has just reached us via Allied Labor News. The trouble seems to be a combination of political blackmail, exploitation, disregard for human welfare, and lack of interest in production for the war effort. The Bolivian Parliament, with Cabinet approval, recently passed the Busch Labor Code, under which mining and industrial enterprises must give dismissed workers one month's severance pay for every year's employment. The Hochschild tin interests thereupon succeeded in organizing a united front with the Patino and Arramayo interests on a policy of granting no wage increases until and unless General Peneranda, president of Bolivia, vetoes the Busch Labor Code.

THIS development came on top of an intensive anti-labor campaign directed against the Confederacion Sindical de Trabajadores de Bolivia, which has been trying to improve conditions of work in the tin mines. The Patino interests were reported to have agreed to a settlement of the strike in their Catavi refinery and Llallagua mines with wage increases and the abolition of the hated company store system, when the Hochschild people intervened to organize all tin owners in blackmailing the new Labor Code. Bolivian labor last week appealed directly to United States unions to bring all possible pressure to bear upon a speedy and favorable settlement of the Patino strike and consequent defeat of the war sabotage schemes led by Hochschild. Strenuous steps must be taken not only by American trade unions, but also by Washington. The success of our

war effort is closely linked to the improvement in the conditions of work of Bolivian tin miners.

Sidelights Abroad

CHILE will break off relations with the Axis soon if over-cautious President Rios will accept the nationwide criticism that there is nothing to be gained in waiting for a more appropriate moment. Trade unions are also pressing for recognition of the Soviet Union. Failure thus far to align Chile against Berlin and Tokyo has not helped in accelerating national unity.

The Greeks have a word for it: *Sabotage*. Hitler has been forced to send back thousands of Greek workers from Germany for spreading defeatism.

Watch for Lombardo Toledano's visit to the United States early in January. As head of the Confederation of Latin American Workers he will propose a Pan-American Labor Congress. Toledano will be seeing William Green and Philip Murray as well as government officials to convince them that such a congress "will mean that the first round in the battle for the security of our continent will have been won."

SPLIT-SECOND tactics is what modern warfare demands. And if you have anything in the way of a wrist or pocket watch the Red Army can put it to good use.

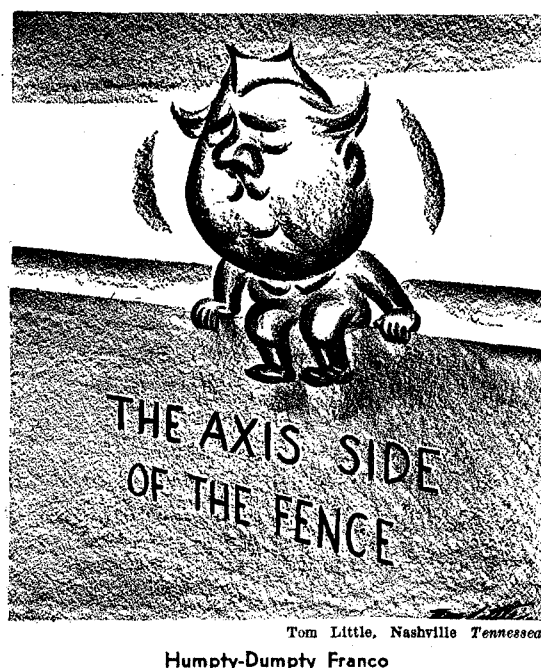
The Soviet Union has not been able to maintain its timepiece production. It had only two watch plants before the war, both

of which have had to be shifted to the rear. The Ambijan Committee for Emergency Aid to the Soviet Union (285 Madison Ave., New York) guarantees immediate shipment to the fighting front of all watches contributed, no matter what their quality or type. The Jewelry Workers Union and several watch experts are doing the repairing and adjustment.

THE closing paragraph in an interview between the spokesman of the Chinese Communist Party and the Yenian daily paper *Liberation* reads: "We hope that the members of the Kuomintang correctly understand our sincerity in the interests of our country and our people and that they have taken further steps along the path of strengthening our cooperation. If such is the case our enemy will be finally driven off Chinese territory no matter how strong he is, and the mighty and independent republic of China will then be successfully built up in the near future." Occasion for the interview was the manifesto of the tenth plenum of the Kuomintang.

THE Mikhailovich myth continues to explode, despite American newspapers. Last week the New York *Daily Worker* published two official documents from Yugoslavia's National Liberation Army telling why Mikhailovich refused to cooperate with genuine guerrilla forces. Material found in Mikhailovich headquarters offers undeniable proof of his relations with the Nazis and Serbian quislings.

According to London press dispatches, the British Communist Party, through Harry Pollitt, has asked the Labor Party to accept it as an affiliated organization.



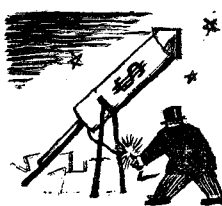


Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

A Scrapper Departs

SO LEON HENDERSON has tossed in the towel. Not since the congressional days of Fiorello LaGuardia has Washington known such a colorful scrapper. One of the most brilliant of the brain-trusters, Henderson was anything but academic or stuffed-shirt. His sprawling form seemed to be merely the visible image of a personality and an energy no less sprawling. Whether he was issuing a new price-control regulation, or exchanging shots with a congressional committee, or putting gas in his old jalopy, or relaxing in a New York night club, Henderson was always "good copy."

It is probable that Henderson's resignation as head of the Office of Price Administration was due more to political than to physical difficulties. As an anti-fascist and original New Dealer, he incurred the hatred of appeasers and reactionaries long before our entrance into the war; one re-



calls Martin Dies' effort to smear him because he had favored the democratic side in the Spanish war. And for advocating over-all price-control Henderson got no valentines from the so-called farm bloc which actually represents big business-as-usual in agriculture. On the other hand, Henderson's own weaknesses antagonized those who should have been his closest collaborators. This was something more than lack of tact. It was not failing eyesight so much as a failure to see the problems of the economy as a whole and to distinguish between friends and foes that made things so tough for him. He alienated labor by his demand for wage-freezing earlier in the year and cheered the Tories by his alarmist speeches that living standards must be ruthlessly cut to 1932 levels. Now these same Tories and defeatists have forced him to resign.

Yet it would be a running away from the truth to ignore the fact that Henderson is, above everything else, a victim of the system under which he worked. No one can tell how much, if at all, he is to be blamed for the bungling of rationing which

has ruffled the tempers of so many millions throughout the country. So long as there is no over-all planning and centralized control of our war economy all kinds of unnecessary dislocations are bound to occur in the distribution of civilian goods as well as in war production. It is reported that Sen. Prentiss Brown of Michigan, who was defeated in the November elections, is slated to be Henderson's successor. He may by suaver methods establish better relations with Congress, but that by itself will not eliminate the defects stemming from a war economy which, like Topsy, just grew.

Ration the Excuses

THE disappearance of Henderson, the whipping boy, may have one good effect: it will focus attention on the real problem. A storm is blowing up in the civilian sector of our war economy. The sudden stoppage of all gasoline sales in the eastern seaboard states except to commercial vehicles was only the most dramatic expression of this crisis. As is well known, there is no shortage of gas; this problem is a direct result of a developing crisis in another sector of our war economy, transportation. And all of it is, of course, tied up with production. The public is being told that the needs of the African offensive and increased shipments of fuel oil have made it necessary to cut down gas. No one will dispute that the armed forces have first call and no sacrifice that strengthens our military effort is too great. In this case, however, we wonder whether the patriotism of the American people isn't being imposed upon. Did the gentlemen who are offering these excuses just discover that in war it is necessary to fight and that in certain months of the year the weather gets cold?

EVEN bigger headaches are on the way. The price control structure is wobbling. Only the other day the OPA announced that wholesalers and retailers would be allowed to increase prices on seventeen food items. The cost of other items in the family budget is going up and quality is going down. Without rationing, as the British experience proved, price rises cannot be checked. Yet in America except for gas, tires, fuel oil, sugar, and coffee, rationing is just a word in the dictionary. Here again we are being fed excuses, such as that the delay in meat rationing is due to the inability to get ration books printed in time—excuses that only cover up. Secretary of Agriculture Wickard stated the other day that no widespread food rationing is being planned because "Congress just won't grant the funds." This is true, and the people will have to start hammering away at the bottleneck of congressional sabotage. Yet the obstructionism of Con-

gress is only a small part of the problem.

The principle of rationing is one that must be established not only in consumers' goods, but as Earl Browder emphasized in his new book, *Victory—and After*, in production materials and in manpower. And it is a principle that must operate not in terms of making a little go a long way, but in terms of providing what is needed—the necessary supplies of raw materials, machines, and workers for war plants, and of food, shelter, and clothing to maintain our fighting forces and our working forces at maximum efficiency.

A Size for Victory

Too large an army? We wonder what the man in the street in Moscow or Chungking would think if he were told that at the very moment when the United States was at long last swinging into offensive action, a debate had been started over whether it was building too big an army. Before we have even begun to fight we are already talking about eliminating some of the fighters!



Somehow we feel that this controversy is only another variation on the victory-through-air-power theme. The myth that this war doesn't require mass armies and can be won largely by machines dies hard despite repeated burial on the blood-soaked plains of Russia. And though honest, patriotic people are among those who are raising the question of the size of our army, they ought to be very much disturbed over the company they're in—for instance, the defeatist *New York Daily News*, which is all for cutting down our army.

NO ONE can accurately estimate just how many Americans will be needed on the fighting fronts to defend our national existence and help free the world from fascism. To a large extent this depends on how soon we and our British allies open a second front in Europe that, together with the Red Army, will crush the Nazi octopus. That will not be an easy job and it will cost the blood of many thousands of Americans. The defeat of Japan will also cost blood—and the cost will be much less provided we fight a true coalition war in alliance with China, India, and Australia.

The tasks that face us are so vast that an army of 7,500,000 men by the end of 1943 doesn't seem too large. Nor are we impressed with the argument that our manpower and womanpower are insufficient to equip an army of this size, a navy of about 2,000,000, and at the same time provide lend-lease supplies for our allies and essential civilian goods and services at home.

WHAT ABOUT OUR COLLEGES?

REFUSAL to gear our colleges to the war effort is not to defend culture but to aid the vandals who seek its destruction. Only a hardbitten educator-as-usual would deny that the war has made a reorientation of the university curriculum as imperative as the conversion of our industrial plant. Since Pearl Harbor the real question has been how best to employ our educational resources for victory and for coping with the problems of a postwar world. And this question has by no means been solved.

It will not be solved until we recognize that our resources for training specialists are an integral part of our resources for turning out planes, munitions, agricultural products, and a sound public health program. Our educational economy, in short, is closely linked to our war economy as a whole. Planning for the colleges is impossible in isolation from planning for other areas and functions of the national life today. The principle of the Tolan-Pepper Bill, calling for centralized over-all planning of a war economy under civilian direction, must be applied to education, no less than to agriculture and industry. The problem cannot be tackled piecemeal. And much of the recent discussion in educational circles has been confusing and futile because it has been piecemeal.

Announcement by the Army and Navy of a program to use college facilities for training military specialists must be evaluated in the light of this total problem. Under this program the Army and Navy will contract with selected schools to furnish instruction as well as housing facilities for men who will be on active duty, in uniform, with pay and under general military discipline. Both the Army and Navy stress that the selection of qualified trainees will be "on a broad democratic basis without regard to financial resources," a provision which should be rigorously observed to eliminate Jim Crow. Specific details of the Army and Navy plans differ in certain respects, owing to differences in the requirements of the two services. It is expected that approximately 200,000 men of from seventeen to twenty-two will be sent to about 200 colleges for periods varying according to the work for which they are being trained.

Most university and college heads welcome the clarification of educational policy by the armed forces and the opportunity to cooperate more effectively in the war effort. When the draft age was reduced to eighteen, the principal source of men college students was eliminated, pending some plan for integrating colleges with war needs. By availing themselves of our school facilities, our military leaders are helping the colleges to survive in a difficult period at the same time that they are increasing the efficiency of the armed forces. This is an important constructive move which merits complete support.

At the same time it should be noted that this program covers only the specific needs of the Army and Navy. Welcome as it is in this respect, it cannot for a moment be viewed as a solution of the general need to plan education in terms of every phase of war production. Insufficient provision has been made for insuring an adequate supply of students trained to carry on work at home that, while not specifically military, is vitally related to the war effort: for example, engineers for industry, physicians and dentists for an expanded health program, agricultural specialists for our rapidly growing food requirements. Government has a serious responsibility to insure such a supply of essential skills, a shortage of which has been strongly apparent in recent months. It is urgent to plan for trained personnel in the Army and Navy; it is no less urgent to plan for trained personnel in vital civilian work. In the absence of over-all planning as envisaged by the Tolan committee report, there is a real danger that our trained reserves will be depleted.

Even today, with manpower and production poorly organized, with our reserves of potential women workers largely untapped, and with Negro labor only partly utilized, we are equipping an army and navy only 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 smaller

than what is contemplated for a year hence. What can we not do once we adopt a manpower program such as the CIO has just proposed and organize our entire economic machine under centralized, planned control?

Eyes on Small Business

WASHINGTON is beginning to worry about the small businessman. It's about time. On November 3 the small businessman registered his worries in a way that can only make trouble for everybody. Last week Lou Holland, head of the Smaller War Plants Corp. and deputy chairman of the War Production Board, was fried over a slow fire by the Small Business Committees of the Senate and House. They wanted to know why after six months so little had been accomplished in the way of utilizing the facilities of little business for war production. Of 2,200 distressed small firms which the SWPC has on file, only 234 have received contracts. Of \$150,000,000 appropriated to help small business, only \$2,000,000 has actually been loaned. Lacking representation in the Procurement Policy Division of the WPB and on the administration of the Controlled Materials Plan, the SWPC has no machinery for assuring either contracts or raw materials to smaller manufacturers.

In a letter to Sen. James E. Murray, chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, Donald Nelson discusses the wholesaler and retailer. In view of the curtailment of consumers' goods and the consequent elimination of many stores, Nelson raises the question "whether such elimination should take place through the natural operations of the competitive system or whether varying degrees of governmental guidance should be undertaken in connection with the preservation of units necessary to place products into consumers' hands."

It is clear that on this, as on most other questions, the WPB, instead of making policy, is acting as a sort of pressure gauge registering the relationship of forces between the business-as-usual elements and those urging centralized, planned administration of our war economy. But Nelson's letter shows that he is beginning to think, though still too hesitantly, along the lines of such centralized direction and control.

The solution of the problem of the small manufacturer is relatively simple. Extensive subcontracting, the planned allocation of materials, and, wherever necessary, the pooling of facilities, will do the trick. As for the retailer, we refer you to the article by Frank Wallace on page 16 which, as far as we know, presents the first constructive proposals in this field.

Script by Jeff Davis

M-G-M's *Tennessee Johnson* was originally titled *The Man on America's Conscience*. If this picture is distributed, despite the protests of people who respect our history, it will go down in the records

as "The Film on America's Conscience." For it is a crude monstrosity that glorifies the treason of Jefferson Davis, defies Andrew Johnson's betrayal of the Union cause, vilifies the sturdy liberator Thaddeus Stevens, and insults the Negro people. There were no stormtroopers at the preview, but their degraded spirits were applauding. Here was an outright apology for slavery. Here was freedom gagged, betrayed, kicked into the vilest corner of a concentration camp. Here, in the midst of a war for national survival, was an enemy bomb timed to smash national unity.

Tennessee Johnson does for Thaddeus Stevens what *Santa Fe Trail* did for John Brown and what *Oliver Wiswell* did for Sam Adams. These ugly distortions, bad enough in peacetime, are even more sinister in time of war. They are particularly sinister when, like *Gone with the Wind*, they celebrate the "white supremacy" dogmas of Tom Connally and Alabama's Governor Dixon. The Office of War Information has recognized this by frowning on revivals of the infamous *Birth of a Nation*. Patriotic Americans should insist on writing to Elmer Davis of the OWI in Washington that *Tennessee Johnson* is equally disruptive of decency and morale.

To the *Daily Worker* and its film critic, David Platt, a vote of thanks is due for their enterprise in exposing this outrage. Their patriotic campaign against *Tennessee Johnson* has called attention to an evil that we must all join in resisting.

Doctor Boas—Trail-Blazer

AS WE go to press, we learn with sorrow of the death of one of the greatest Americans of our time, Dr. Franz Boas. Dr. Boas was one of the commanding world figures in anthropology whose work was a shining monument to that democratic culture which nurtured him and a challenge to the obscurantism and racism which reached its foul fruition in Nazism. An immigrant and a Jew, he became a symbol of the best traditions of Americanism. Long before the rise of the Nazis, Dr. Boas set about disproving the doctrine of racial purity and racial supremacy. He profoundly influenced all later work in this field by showing that there are no important biological or mental differences among races, and that the "backwardness" of certain races is due to historical and environmental factors. Dr. Boas also made major contributions in the study of the culture and language of the North American Indians.

With the triumph of Hitler in Germany, there began a new phase in Dr. Boas' development. The man of science became a man of public affairs, an active supporter of republican Spain, a warm friend of the Soviet Union, an advocate of the freedom of Earl Browder, founder and head of the

American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom. Needless to say, his heart and soul were in the war against the Axis and he looked forward with faith and hope to its victorious outcome. In a later issue, *NEW MASSES* will publish an estimate of this illustrious citizen of America and of the free world.

Sidelights at Home

THE curtain rang down on the 77th Congress last week. Senator Barkley, the majority leader, called it "one of the outstanding Congresses in the history of the United States." It was certainly outstanding for obstructionism and the degree to which patriotism was lost in the shuffle of politics-as-usual. Among unfinished business which must start all over the long trek toward enactment are the Anti-Poll Tax Bill and the third War Powers Bill. The new Congress opens January 6.

Plus: Ham Fish's resignation (evidently by request of the Republican high command) from the House Foreign Affairs Committee—the only act of patriotism he was guilty of in his twenty years in Congress. . . . Minus: The executive order giving the Dies committee authority to examine income tax returns and other tax data in the possession of the Treasury Department. The committee is preparing its annual holdup of Congress, having spent for the usual subversive purposes the \$110,000 it mulcted out of Congress last year.

WHAT's this we read in the War Production Board's report on the first year of war: that we are now entering the phase of "all-out mobilization and centralized direction" of our economy? Looks like a plug for the Tolan-Kilgore-Pepper Bill.

Despite the excellence of so much of its work, the War Labor Board is fast becoming a bottleneck in war production. The executive boards of two major CIO unions, the United Auto Workers, and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, last week criticized the long delays in rendering decisions. The International Association of Machinists (AFL) registered the same kick. The UE adopted a seven-point program for streamlining the functioning of the WLB.

Sentenced to hang last Friday on the familiar "rape" charge, William Wellman, Negro laborer, was granted a sixty-day reprieve by Gov. J. M. Broughton of North Carolina in response to thousands of protests. Wellman was actually working on a government construction job 400 miles away at the time of the alleged crime.



GUEST EDITORIAL

by **ALBERT DEUTSCH**



Albert Deutsch is a New York newspaperman whose column on health problems has evoked national attention. He is the author of "The Mentally Ill in America: The History of Their Care and Treatment" and co-author with David M. Schneider of "The History of Public Welfare in New York State." In the following editorial Mr. Deutsch continues the discussion of Surgeon General Parran's recent article in NEW MASSES. Last week we published the statements sent us by John A. Kingsbury and Ray Lyman Wilbur, chancellor of Stanford University, California. Others will appear in subsequent issues.

SURGEON GENERAL PARRAN succinctly stated the main problems of wartime medical care in his paper published in NEW MASSES December 1.

The growing doctor-shortage, as Dr. Parran points out, is only part of the over-all problem of preserving civilian health in wartime. Dentists, nurses, and other elements of medical manpower must be considered. So must the conservation of medical equipment and supplies. The people's health, in great measure, depends on how quickly this over-all problem is handled satisfactorily on a national scale. It won't be solved on a business-as-usual basis. Yet, a full year after Pearl Harbor, organized medicine still insists that it be handled on just such a basis.

For one year the Procurement and Assignment Service (PAS), the federal agency set up to ration doctors for civilian and military needs, has been handling it on that basis. The PAS, let it be said, was inspired by the American Medical Association, and has been dominated by represen-

THE HEALTH DEBATE

tatives of organized medicine since its creation in November 1941.

Dr. Parran, in his article, quotes Mr. Channing Dooley of the War Manpower Commission as follows: "When you have a tough problem to solve, break it up into a lot of little problems and then solve them one by one."

I cannot agree that this sentiment is applicable to the present crisis in wartime medical care. As a matter of fact, I believe this is precisely the approach that's prevented equitable distribution of our medical manpower and facilities thus far. What's needed right now is to see the problem of medical care *whole* and to tackle it that way, instead of breaking it up into disparate segments.

THE PAS messed up its task mainly because it tried to segment it. President Roosevelt's executive order creating the agency clearly gave it the responsibility of supervising the procurement and assignment of doctors so that an equitable balance would be maintained between military and civilian supply. The PAS interpreted its task as first procuring doctors for the armed forces, and then looking after civilian medical needs. It accepted without question the Army's own estimates of the number of medical men it needed. No effort was made to learn from the experience of our Allies who, it turned out, have done well with a far less proportion of military doctors. The PAS accepted the Army's arbitrary estimate, based on the ideal theory of an illimitable supply of physicians, and procured all the doctors it asked for.

The expert testimony produced at the Pepper Senate subcommittee's hearings on medical manpower has shown pretty conclusively that the Army's estimate of its doctor needs was too high, and that it has dangerously overdrawn on the general medical manpower pool. By the time the PAS was awakened to that fact by the outcries of health experts, grave doctor shortages had already cropped up in over 300 war-boom areas where health protection was most vital to the war effort.

The lopsided distribution of doctors that had existed before the war was allowed by PAS to become even more unequal during the war emergency. The PAS excuse that it had no power to check this maldistribution is feeble; it knew what the situation was and it remained silent when it was PAS' patent duty to at least call public

attention to the unhealthy trend. So when PAS finally got around to thinking of civilian medical needs, it found itself already faced with grave dislocations caused by its shortsighted procurement policy. It had tried to solve, "one by one," problems which were really integrated and inseparable.

Turning to the civilian field, the national PAS adopted the policy of "local responsibility" for solving doctor shortages. It left to the PAS in each state the question of meeting doctor shortages in its own borders, and to each local PAS the decision as to whether it needed more doctors.

The policy of PAS is readily understandable. Its directorship is dominated by representatives of organized medicine. Organized medicine has always exhibited a phobia against "federal control" and "government medicine." It has a morbid fear of centralizing authority in any national agency in the matter of medical care. Hence the insistence on "local responsibility," war or no war. Result: the many examples of acute doctor-shortages in war industry areas presented by Dr. Parran remain unsolved to this day. Scores of others might be mentioned. There is the classic case of Middle River, near Baltimore, where 35,000 Glenn Martin bomber plant workers and their families are deprived of adequate medical care because the six doctors of the area, in their capacity as a committee of the Baltimore County Medical Society, have successfully blocked Uncle Sam's efforts to bring medical men and medical facilities to the place. They are making plenty of money, and they don't want outside competition or "government medicine."

Medical care is essentially a national problem. It must be tackled on a national basis by an over-all national agency, empowered to distribute available medical personnel and facilities to the best advantage of both the military and civilian population. It can't be solved in segmented parts, or on a local basis.

The medical needs of the military services have the first priority. But those needs must be met intelligently, with due regard to the limits of existing medical resources. It is crazy to recruit trained obstetricians and pediatricians for army service, where their special skills are wasted—as has happened in many cases—while pregnant women and sick children suffer for lack of special care. It is no less foolhardy to send industrial doctors into military service,

where their skills are useless, when so many war industry plants desperately need them.

I don't believe that a compulsory draft of doctors for civilian service is needed at this time. The PAS has in its files the names of thousands of physicians who have patriotically volunteered to be "dislocated" from their present practice in places where the medical supply is relatively adequate—such as New York—and to be sent to areas experiencing a serious doctor-shortage.

The PAS has failed to use this great reservoir of volunteer doctors. Except for a few isolated instances it has failed to utilize the hundreds of refugee physicians who find themselves idle in the midst of a recognized need for their skills.

We need a national over-all agency to handle with vigor and intelligence the whole integrated problem of medical care—

doctors, nurses, dentists, hospitals, medical equipment, and supplies. We need to speed up action on pooling all medical resources for maximum effectiveness. The present PAS has shown by its impotency that it isn't the proper agency to handle this problem. Medical care is a social function. Doctors should determine its scientific aspects, but it is only right that labor, industry, and other lay groups should be represented on policy-making boards.

THE US Public Health Service is best fitted to administer a wartime program of civilian medical care. Responsibility and authority should be delegated to it. The present PAS might be replaced by an advisory group of medical men and representative laymen to counsel the Public Health Service.

The stresses of war always bring the need of streamlining and centralizing authority in order to speed up conversion of peacetime functions to a wartime tempo. There is no question of loss of democratic rights in this process, so long as power remains in the hands of duly elected representatives of the people and, ultimately, in the people's will. The sooner we streamline medical care on the home front, the more lives will be saved and the quicker the war will be won.

I HAVE deliberately confined myself, in this commentary on Dr. Parran's paper, to a discussion of wartime medical needs. I am firmly convinced that now is the time to prepare and to plan for postwar health security for the nation. That subject needs plenty of public attention, too.



WATCH ON THE POTOMAC by BRUCE MINTON

MR. WILSON GOES TO TOWN

Washington.

THE biggest news in Washington these days, even though the press has not given him his due, is Charles E. Wilson, head of the production executive committee of the War Production Board. For Mr. Wilson adds something new to the war agencies—a combination of energy, directness, forcefulness, courage, and a good sense of humor he is going and how to get things done. Production is the number one headache of the domestic front; production of military supplies plus civilian necessities must be mastered before the United States can exert its full strength against the Axis. Charles E. Wilson of General Electric has rolled up both sleeves and really pitched in. What is most refreshing is his assurance that the job can be done. Up to now excuses, rationalizations, explanations of failures have been the too frequent refrain. Mr. Wilson shows a healthy desire to get on with the work despite obstacles, and a correspondingly healthy disregard for toes that must be stamped upon or precedents that must be violated.

When he first arrived in Washington, Wilson quite naturally went to the procurement agencies of the armed services to learn what was what. When he discovered that the services had no precise idea of where things stood or how production was going, he experienced a terrific shock. Quickly enough Wilson perceived that the acknowledged chaos of production stemmed from a complete lack of coordination and planning from top to bottom. Wilson turned to the production figures them-

selves and reached several important conclusions. With Donald Nelson, he called on President Roosevelt. After hearing Wilson's story, the President is understood to have offered him any powers he felt he needed. Wilson refused—turning to Nelson, he remarked that WPB already possessed all the powers it could wield if Nelson would set about using them. Nelson began to do his part. He issued a four-point directive authorizing Wilson to supervise the production of equipment for the armed services, and gave Wilson re-

sponsibility "for the review, adjustment, and approval of production plans, programs, and schedules of the Army, Navy, and Maritime Commission." Moreover, Wilson can determine whether production schedules and claims for raw materials conform with plans, programs, and schedules he has outlined. He can confer directly with manufacturers who have been awarded government contracts for the purpose of speeding up the factory flow. To him comes all information on scheduling.

In other words, the confusion arising from multiplicity of authority, divided as it is among the armed services, the various branches of WPB, and myriad other agencies, has been strongly challenged. It would be completely erroneous to believe that planning has finally come into its own. Wilson has only just started to assert himself, and the opposition remains bitter and formidable. But the showdown is in the making and there seems good reason for confidence that Wilson will not emerge empty-handed.

This is no fight of personalities, though individuals play a big role. The struggle is primarily one of conception, best expressed by the two leading protagonists: Wilson wants production at any cost and tends to approach the problem from the viewpoint of over-all planning; while Ferdinand Eberstadt of WPB's Requirements Board relies on the status quo and works to maintain the present anarchy. To appreciate Wilson's challenge, it is necessary to contrast his outlook with Eberstadt's,



Charles E. Wilson

because the methods of Eberstadt and Wilson are mutually contradictory. Both cannot have their finger in the production pie. A sure victory for one spells final defeat for the other.

Eberstadt's contribution is called the Controlled Materials Plan to solve production difficulties. Briefly, CMP is a static conception to divide up existing supplies of raw materials, allocating them to prime contractors who in turn have the authority to determine the apportionment of these materials to subcontractors. CMP, as has been pointed out before, is a banker's, not a producer's, plan. It takes the total stocks of available raw materials and sees to it that claims against such stock do not exceed the supply. If the claims are too large, CMP does not exert itself to increase the pool of raw materials; instead it pares down the claims so that the debit and credit side of the ledger are in balance.

But the CMP way of doing things does not end production chaos. The assumption is that once raw materials are parceled out, every other step in the production process proceeds smoothly. Yet this is far from what happens. The allocation of armor plate, for example, does not automatically carry with it the solution of manpower shortages in shipbuilding plants or tank factories. To set quotas for aluminum does not guarantee a steady flow of semi-manufactured parts. Accessories needed for planes do not arrive on schedule just because raw materials have been divvied up among prime contractors. Allocation of materials cannot of itself bring a correct balance between the output of planes and tanks. The production process is complex; it involves delicate and adjustable controls in all its phases. It demands careful supervision not alone of materials distribution, but also of manpower, transportation, plant and equipment, of every stage in the long task of turning raw materials into countless different finished products.

The Eberstadt method presupposes conflict. Eberstadt becomes a sort of grand arbiter who divides up materials but does not organize production. Organization is left to "natural laws," to the blind workings of the existing market. In essence, this limits the speed of production to the speed of the lowest, least efficient unit. The result is bottlenecks, innumerable bottlenecks, that are neither anticipated nor broken. The supply of raw materials is accepted at its existing volume, with little attempt made to swell it, either at the source or through substitutions or by greater efficiency in manufacturing methods. CMP continues the prevailing chaos, aggravates it, and at the same time—being a banker's "solution"—enshrines existing financial relationships as inviolable. Under CMP, small business is doomed, since the largest corporations (the prime contractors) receive almost all

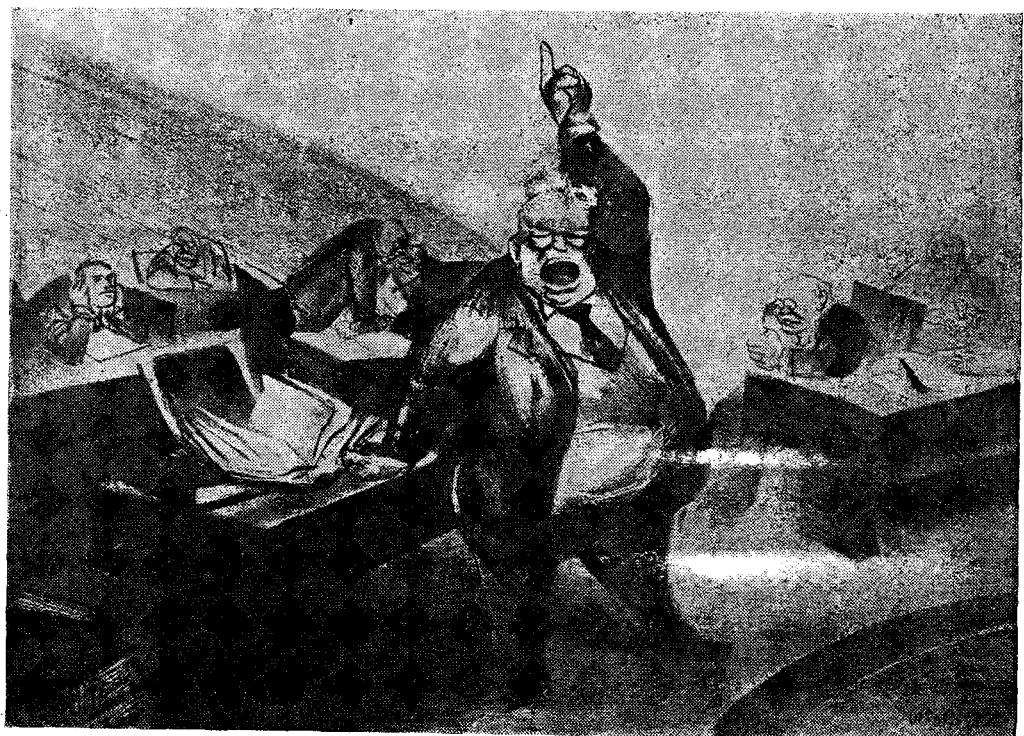
the available materials, leaving little or nothing for the smaller enterprisers. CMP adds up to profits-as-usual, production-as-usual, concentration of industrial control in the hands of the top few—as usual.

IN OPPOSITION to this static, essentially reactionary, and debilitating program, Wilson's methods are dynamic and progressive. For Wilson sets out with one idea uppermost in his mind—to get production regardless of obstacles, and to hell with anything or anybody standing in his way. He wants to *organize* supply in relation to needs. He consciously expands supply, using whatever means are necessary, and he relates schedules of production directly to this supply. He desires to obtain a production flow even if that entails changes in existing market mechanisms. He sees his problem as one of interrelating every factor of production with every other factor. He has no fear of violating or transforming present conditions, however hoary, to meet the war necessity. He deliberately matches capacity to resources, thinking in terms of conversion and any other alteration that steps up the tempo from start to finish. And because he starts out by interrelating every process all along the line, he can foresee bottlenecks, get around them, smash them.

Actually Wilson goes in much the same direction as that envisaged by the CIO and AFL and the five congressional committees backing the Tolan-Kilgore-Pepper Bill for an Office of War Mobilization. It is known that Wilson supports the bill and has talked over his problems with its proponents. By his drive to coordinate every

step in production with every other step, Wilson has begun to put into action some of the machinery which the war mobilization bill would provide. Wilson frankly *plans*. Wilson frankly believes in *civilian control of our war economy*. Wilson *knows* production, just as Henry Kaiser has proved he does. Kaiser solves shipbuilding problems as a whole, not partially or haphazardly or with an eye to precedent or convention. Wilson would do the same for all production.

The conflict between Eberstadt and Wilson, between the static and the dynamic, between those who conceive of production limited to the amounts obtained from an as-usual approach, and those who take the sky as the limit, and who act to force production to ever greater heights by using any method that will achieve this end—this fundamental conflict has been joined. The length of the war, even the outcome, depend upon which concept prevails. Around Wilson are gathering the progressives, the win-the-war forces in WPB and other agencies. Passage of the Tolan-Kilgore-Pepper Bill would create the basic framework for the overall planning of our war economy that is so urgently needed. Already, Wilson's energetic example has imbued Donald Nelson with new courage and determination. Wilson, arch enemy of the group whose first response is always "It can't be done," provides the answer to the present disastrous tendency to "cut-back" production. He has shown an understanding of what all-out war implies. And he responds by aiming for just those production results on which all-out victory depends.



"The Speaker" by William Gropper. This lithograph won a \$250 prize for prints, in the huge "Artists for Victory" exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



FACTORIES FOR LATIN AMERICA

UNDER the impact of logistics, a military science which determines the exact amount of shipping space wasted by fighting the Japanese with weapons manufactured in New Haven instead of Calcutta, industry is being established in parts of the world formerly looked on merely as sources for raw materials, picturesque travel literature, and interest payments on bond issues floated in London and New York. Among the colonial and semi-colonial countries which are being increasingly industrialized by the compulsions of the war are the republics of Latin America. This month the first of some 500 US factories, made idle by the conversion of American industry, left New York and Baltimore for Latin American countries. The factories are obsolete, their use will be hampered by the lack of a coordinated economic program for the entire hemisphere, and they will produce only small quantities of consumers' goods, but they represent the beginnings of a process which hastens improved relations between the United States and Latin America.

The process is being speeded up by the efforts of Latin American labor. Allied Labor News was told two weeks ago by Salvador Ocampo, leader of the Chilean Chamber of Workers (CTCh) and a prominent member of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies. Ocampo reported that the CTCh, whose 110,000 members are a powerful force in Chilean politics, has now established an Industrial Planning department to push the drive to industrialize the country. "At present," he said, "Chile's economy is at the mercy of fluctuating copper and nitrate prices, and this situation can only be ended by the establishment of basic industry."

Labor pressure for industrialization has had impressive results. Three power plants have been built in Rancagua and new cement factories, extremely necessary in Chile because of the prevalence of earthquakes, are being established in Iquique and South Chile. The CTCh is now pressing the government to build a government-owned copper refinery in Atacama and it has put forward a detailed program for restoring the port of Antofagasta, once the center of Chile's nitrate trade, by completing the Antofagasta-Salta railway connecting Argentina and Chile, by building new docks and warehouses, and by establishing industry in northern Chile.

One important political reason for industrializing Chile was given by Ocampo

in a description of new blast furnaces recently built in Corral after a vigorous campaign by the National Federation of Metal Workers. "This expansion is particularly important because it will strengthen the labor movement in South Chile," he said. "Corral is only a few miles from Valdivia, one of the strategic bases of the Chilean-German fifth column. The presence of a strong union of anti-fascist steel workers in Corral has been one of the factors preventing a serious Nazi outbreak in South Chile."

IN ARGENTINA, which has yet to break with the Axis, national unity continues to develop against the policies of pro-Axis Pres. Ramon Castillo. In Chile, for example, the Confederation of Workers participates independently in politics, being one of the members of the National Democratic Alliance, successor to the Popular Front which has swept all recent Chilean elections. The General Confederation of Workers of Argentina (CGT), however, has never taken a political position, and the preoccupation of its 250,000 members with strictly economic matters has been largely responsible for Castillo's success in misrepresenting the anti-fascist sentiments of the Argentinians.

Now the CGT has broken sharply with tradition, and at a heated executive committee meeting, its first in two and a half years, it has resolved to play the same role in Argentina that the CTCh has played in Chile. The first political job the CGT has set itself is the promotion of national unity among anti-Castillo organizations. Immediately union locals in several parts of the country announced the formation of Committees of Democratic Unity, to which Socialists, Radicals, Communists, National Democrats, and anti-Castillo Conservatives are invited to affiliate. The secretary of the Building Workers Federation announced that a similar organization would be formed shortly on a national scale.

A momentary split which developed in the CGT over its political function has now been healed. Jose Domenech, CGT general secretary, who appears to share John L. Lewis' views of the war, withdrew from the executive committee with his followers after an attack on "Communist sympathizers," among whom he included all enemies of Castillo. The Argentinian Special Section (political police) immediately demonstrated the disadvantages of labor strife by arresting fourteen

leading trade union officials, suppressing several pro-democratic papers, and breaking up union meetings all over the city. The demonstration was such that unity was restored in the CTG almost immediately, and the fourteen officials released.

In spite of Domenech, the reunited executive committee passed a resolution saying: "It is high time that Argentinian organized labor expressed its repugnance at the electoral frauds which maintain President Castillo and his followers in office. . . . It is high time that normal constitutional rights should be reestablished, that the written law should prevail."

IN ANOTHER cable to Allied Labor News Jim Healy, secretary of the Australian Workers Federation (longshoremen), said: "Our comrades in America have expressed concern at statements appearing in the American press suggesting that everything possible is not being done to expedite shipping movements on this side of the Pacific. We can assure them that these reports are malicious inventions, designed to discredit our union in the United States."

Harry Bridges, Australian-born president of the CIO longshoremen's union on the Pacific Coast, has invited a delegation of Australian watersiders to the United States to inspect the methods by which the longshoremen's union has cut the turn-around of ships in Pacific Coast ports to an average of four days. The Australians have asked the government to arrange for the exchange of delegations.

Since last April, when a labor-management-government commission was established to control the working of Australian ports, turn-around of ships delivering supplies to US forces in Australia has been cut a third, Healy said. Longshoremen work the ships as they arrive, and continue working as long as it takes to unload them, sometimes as long as twenty-four hours. Labor-management cooperation has increased the mechanization of Australian wharves, and an efficient system of central hiring in a hiring hall has replaced the chaotic "auction block" system. Thus Australia has learned from the efficient methods developed by Bridges' union, while on the East Coast of the United States labor is still hired in shape-ups, and loading of war cargoes takes three times as long as necessary because of business-as-usual methods and the absence of labor-management cooperation.

MARTIN T. BROWN.



GROPPES

ALEXANDRA WRITES A LETTER

In a hospital, the Soviet woman guerrilla reads an article by Ruth McKenney. Her reply. "I like to think it was your gift I tasted in the forest." And Ruth's answer. "Our love and devotion."

DEAR Ruth McKenney: This letter is from a Russian partisan, Alexandra Ivanova. You don't know me. I am an ordinary Soviet girl, no different from thousands in the Soviet Union. But I know you, although I have never seen you. What's more, you seem an acquaintance or even a friend to me. I will explain.

I am in a hospital now. I was hit by a bullet while I was carrying a wounded commander. I am better now. I can even walk. In the magazine *International Literature* I read your story of how, together with your kids, you made up a package for the Red Army.* I enjoyed the story and I like to think that it was your gift I tasted once, near Leningrad. We were holding the line in the forest. Suddenly the commander appeared, carrying a package in his hands. He smiled, said it was a gift from America and that the bravest man should get it. He chose two men who had distinguished themselves in a recent battle. I was the only girl in the detachment and the men always treated me to everything they got. They always laughed at me, saying that I was a baby, because I liked sweets. There were nice things in the package, including condensed coffee.

Perhaps it was not your package but I like to think it was because I like the way you write. You understand this whole war rightly and how we are defending Leningrad.

I want to tell you some things about myself. Probably many people feel and think as I do.

During the Finnish war I graduated from a nurses' school. When the Germans attacked us I volunteered for the army. Then I fought in a partisan detachment until I was wounded. I will go again when I get well.

THE first time I saw the Germans was July 14, 1941. That was in the Prokhnev district. I lay concealed in the bushes. It was night, and as the moon came out the first tanks appeared on the highway. And in the turret of one of the tanks I saw a German! How I wanted to hurl a hand grenade at him. But I had been forbidden to do so. Here was this German driving his tank over my Russian land and I lay watching him, doing nothing. I was exactly twenty-three years old that day. I wanted to destroy them all. The hatred in my heart could not be any greater, I thought then. But I was mistaken.

Another time a German punitive detachment marched through the villages of the Leningrad region. The Germans wanted to know in which direction the partisans had gone. They cross-examined Barkanov, chairman of "Paporotno" collective farm. When he refused to tell them, the Germans tied his arms and legs to two tanks and drove them in opposite directions. Barkanov was torn to pieces.

They also tortured Anatoly Barkanov's little son. He said nothing either and they killed the eleven-year-old boy before the eyes of his mother who went insane.

After that I hated the Germans still more and I again thought, hatred could not be any greater. And again I was mistaken.

The Germans burned down the village of Hilikaya Diva. They drove the peasants into a big barn and set fire to it. Those who tried to escape were machine-gunned. We hurried up but the people were all dead. There were burned children and old folk lying about and women with babes in their arms.

*The story referred to here was first printed in *NEW MASSES*, in Ruth McKenney's "Strictly Personal" column.

Here I am writing you of all these horrors. I saw it all with my own eyes. I am still very young and I can't live a long time. Nobody will have peace until fascism is wiped out. I want so much that people who have not seen them would understand that too. Many understand it with their minds but they must also understand it with their hearts. When I read your story I thought "She understands."

I want to ask you to explain to other people in America so that they would know the fascists as we do here.

That will be the end of Hitler.

I shake your hand. Kiss for me your little boy Tommy, and Paddy, who likes chocolate so much. I sympathize with him.

And tell them that a Soviet girl sends them fraternal greetings and thanks for their love of the Red Army and for their gifts.

Yours,
ALEXANDRA IVANOVA.



Edik Briandinsky, who reads and listens to the news at the same time, is the son of a Soviet pilot, A. Briandinsky, who has taken part in heroic exploits in the war against the Nazi invaders. Many Soviet children have been tortured and killed in this gigantic resistance, and their own courageous deeds testify to their love of their country and hatred of fascism.



Child Welfare Consultation in the Soviet Union. The care of children, instead of being subordinated to military necessities, has received special attention in the USSR since the outbreak of the war.

TO THE editors of NEW MASSES and all the many friends who have sent me greetings:

Dear Friends: This morning I was lying here in my hospital bed smiling exultantly to myself. The nurse had just taken our elegant daughter Eileen back to the nursery. She's very nice—our daughter Eileen—and at this moment she's sleeping safely and soundly in one of those modern American miracles, a totally antiseptic, germ-proof, everything-proof hospital nursery. Nothing can touch her or harm her. She is surrounded by love and tender care. Nurses and doctors hover over her, waiting for the slightest variation in her conduct. You know the song, that very sweet one—"Angels watch o'er you, all through the night." So it is with our baby—the angels being modern scientists with germ masks, sterile gowns, and alcohol-scrubbed hands—but angels all the same.

And as if this weren't enough, just after the baby went back to its bed our dumpling Patrick called up on the telephone to inquire the latest news of his sister Eileen and to report that he had been chosen for the important role of Dunder in the kindergarten Christmas play. He is going to wear paper horns and cardboard hoofs, as befits the lead reindeer in the important theatrical production.

It seemed to me, as Paddy finally hung up that—I say this in all solemnity—that at this Christmas season, with my room filled with flowers and gifts and all the warm remembrances of you, my dear friends, that indeed, my cup runneth over. I was so very happy.

Then the nurse brought in the mail.

Dear friends, read this letter, and then read it again and again.

Our baby sleeps safely, our Paddy practices the gallop of Santa's magic steeds, only because this faraway friend, Alexandra Ivanova, has walked with terror, holding back with her bare hands the horror that threatens to engulf us all. When will she have a chance to hold a child—her own baby—in her arms? How will this Christmas be for her, for little Alexandra

Ivanova, the "baby" of the guerrilla detachment, she with the sweet tooth. She says so casually in her letter that she will return to the guerrillas. She says—without a sigh—that she has not very long to live.

And my happiness is bought with the pain of her wounds—our dear children live surrounded with warmth and tenderness because she and the brave Russian people for all these years of agony have stood off the Nazi plague with their blood, with their very lives.

What can I say to answer the words of Alexandra Ivanova?

From a profoundly humble heart I can send her my gratitude and love—but that is so little. No, the only real answer I can make Alexandra Ivanova is a promise and a pledge. I know, dear American friends, that you all join with me in sending this brave Russian girl our promise to keep faith with her courage. Dear Alexandra Ivanova, we Americans will never give up the fight for justice and peace! We will win this people's war! We will avenge the children you saw tortured to death! We will wipe off the face of the earth even the memory of the inhuman beasts who condemned the people of your village to death in those terrible flames.

DEAR Alexandra Ivanova! I hope this Christmas message will somehow reach you in your distant forests. I hope, too, that by some miracle the package of chocolates and coffee our family is sending you will end up in your hands. And oh how profoundly I wish that you will come safely through the ordeal of this inhuman war, to live to see freedom in the world. Yes, and not only peace and liberty, but to you who so completely deserve it, I wish—I hope—for you the great hour when you and a dear husband will look for the first time on the face of a child, your child, whose safety and happiness is forever secure.

This message brings you our love and devotion and gratitude. Salud! Good fortune!

RUTH McKENNEY.

LITTLE MERCHANTS, BIG HEADACHES

Is Main Street turning into a "vast cemetery for small retailers"? The problem of gearing the small independents into a total war economy. An estimated 300,000 will be out of business within a year.

"**M**AIN STREET was always a couple of blocks too long," remarked a chain store operator the other day. Thus he dismissed the problem of the small retailers in these war days. As he sees them, these little merchants, with their stores distant from the busy-traffic expensive locations, have always lived on the borderline of failure. The war with its attendant shortages is simply going to administer the *coup de grace*—and that's that.

Testifying recently before the Senate Small Business Committee, Undersecretary of Commerce Wayne C. Taylor estimated that the total number of mercantile establishments in the United States will be reduced by perhaps 300,000 by the end of 1943. He thought this would largely be the result of merchandise shortages.

This prospect the chain store man accepts with unconcern. The Senate Small Business Committee is worrying about it. But how does the small businessman himself feel as he faces imminent dissolution? We have some evidence of his thoughts in the voting on November 3. In part the ballots reflected dissatisfaction with the failure of the administration to safeguard the interests of the small businessman. That these votes went to apocryphal and reactionaries in many cases, who were not really but friends of little business, does not diminish the importance to the war effort and to national unity of a planned program of aid to small business.

One source of muddlement in the talk about the problems of small business is the lumping together of all types of enterprises when, as a matter of fact, the small manufacturer has a set of problems very different from those of the small retailer. Take their situation today. Congressional committees have brought out the fact that a few monopoly enterprises have enjoyed seventy-five percent or more of all military orders while small manufacturers have been forced to beg for contracts and many have closed up entirely. Yet the plain fact is that when it comes to the small manufacturer today, all that is needed to set him working is a new viewpoint on the part of those in charge of our production program. Once the resolution is there to win the war by using *all* our productive forces, your small manufacturer will be put to work. True, we may not solve the problem of his ultimate fate in an economy crowded with giants, but we will be working him at capacity for the duration. After all, we need him to win the war. "Somewhere between a third and a half of our productive capacity is found in small- and medium-sized businesses," according to testimony before the Senate Small Business Committee by Mr. Hinrichs, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But even a new viewpoint will not solve the problem of the small retailer. Both in peace and in war he has his special gamut to run. In an excellent monograph recently issued by the Department of Commerce, "Small Retailers Face the War," we are told that "between 300,000 and 500,000 enterprises have been launched by hopeful owners each year from the turn of the century to the present. Births have usually exceeded deaths, but the latter have not lagged far behind in any one year. Discontinuances have ranged from 250,000 to 450,000 annually during the last four decades. Failures and other types of discontinuances are thus not a new experience, or primarily the result of current conditions. One of the really normal features of our business world is mortality." But since the mortality trend in the number of retail stores has been upward, Mr. Taylor's statement that there will be 300,000 fewer enterprises by the end of 1943 means possibly 750,000 "discontinuances" in the year ahead—a prospect of personal tragedies and national havoc about which we cannot afford to be complacent.

TO GRAPPLE with the small man's problems we must understand the special character of *small* business. A small business is not simply a younger version of a larger enterprise. It is not a concern which has yet to attain its full size. To think in these terms is to fall victim to the pipe dream of the little man: that some day he too will be big. No, the cruel fact is that practically all small business is a permanently stunted form of enterprise which cannot grow larger, like the dwarfed trees in a formal Chinese garden. One hundred years ago the small fur trader might grow into a powerful department store. Today the small man is the kitten to the big business tiger, and any transformation is in the nature of a miracle. Since small business has little capital and it takes big money to be big business, the little man lives on the crumbs the big fellow leaves. As a manufacturer he makes the commodities which the giant permits him to fabricate, or he operates in an industry which big business disdains to invade. As a retailer he opens his store on a side street, or in a poorer neighborhood, or in a light traffic area which the chain store operator who seeks prime locations (and is able and willing to pay the rent) will reject.

There can be no doubt that it is the small merchant who is bearing the brunt of the war-time pressures. In 1940 nine out of every ten retailers failing had liabilities under \$25,000, and half of the commercial failures in all classifications had liabilities under \$5,000. They live, these small storekeepers, close to the brink of catastrophe all the time. Out of 1,770,355 chain and independent retail stores

in the country, 79.4% did a business of under \$20,000 a year in 1939. In this group of 1,306,619 retail stores is to be found the great majority of self-employed merchants and, in addition, 920,000 out of a total of 3,950,000 employees in the retail trade as a whole. In this huge company, in which more than half of *all* American business enterprises are included, whole families work behind the counter, children toil after school and learn to carry in their hearts the fears and worries of their merchant parents. The total net income is pitifully small. Less than thirty dollars a week is what these small retailers earn on a generous average.

These are the dwellers in the deserts of distribution. They cannot aspire to the rich valleys. Among them are the halt and the lame, the misfits and the incompetents, the aspiring individualists and the smart traders. Once the small merchant was the backbone of American business, and its symbol. Even today he is an important member of the middle class, influencing its thinking, rooted in his community, a citizen and a neighbor. Widespread destruction of small business on a scale far exceeding the "discontinuances" of pre-war years would involve a blow to national morale as well as a disruption of essential civilian services and supplies. On the other hand, we cannot "freeze in" for the duration all small businesses, many of which would have gone in the "normal" course.

The pressures which arise purely out of the war effort are today squeezing the small retailer painfully, and with him many larger stores in special lines of business, as, for example, automobile dealers. Already one-third of all independent stores find themselves in arid fields with lines of goods dwindling to extinction. These 480,000 stores, most of them small, face an increase in their expense ratios as their volume of sales drops. As it is, they operate very close to the chasm of failure. With shortages and the new restrictions imposed by price control and rationing they feel themselves doomed.

WHAT are the factors operating to crush the small retailer? Can we curb some of them without injuring the war effort? On what basis should assistance be rendered? These are some of the questions which confront us today. We shall find that their answer is bound up with the key problems of victory. For today the question is not one of reforming the world for the small storekeeper, but of making him part of our country's war effort and in that way helping alleviate his own situation as well.

The immediate problem facing retailers is that of supplies. If they can get merchandise, the buying power exists to move it out of

their stores. If they can turn to lines of goods which they have not carried before, they can continue to live. Certainly if they have accumulated stocks of merchandise they can coast along for a while. Here is how the little retailer has made out in the scramble for merchandise as against the big store. This is a report on the extent to which inventories were increased during 1941 in independent retail stores, using the annual sales as a guide to the size of store:

\$100,000 and over.....	26%
\$50,000 to \$100,000.....	17%
\$30,000 to \$50,000.....	14%
\$20,000 to \$30,000.....	11%
\$10,000 to \$20,000.....	8%
Less than \$10,000.....	7%
All stores combined.....	23%

THIS table shows the big store cramming its warehouses full of goods for the boom selling days ahead while the little fellow, without the ready cash, can take in only tiny amounts. When manufacturers produce smaller quantities of their commodities for civilian distribution, they are naturally going to ship their merchandise to the bigger and well rated stores. Wholesalers see the quicksands ahead and begin to retreat, which means that they too begin to weigh each customer and decide which should be dropped as unpromising and too great a credit risk.

How restricted capital and short credit lines affect the small stores is well illustrated in the table below. Here you see different kinds of stores, with a comparison in inventory increase during 1941 between stores doing an annual sales volume of \$100,000 and over and stores doing less than \$10,000:

Percent of Inventory Increase During 1941

Kind of business	Stores doing \$100,000 and over	Stores doing less than \$10,000
Food Stores	33%	8%
General Stores	19%	2%
Filling Stations	26%	1%
Drug Stores	13%	1%
Dry Goods Stores.....	21%	1%
Apparel Stores	22%	6%
Furniture & Radio Stores	39%	5%
All Stores Combined....	26%	7%

(Source: Department of Commerce, "Small Retailers Face the War")

One reason why most attempts to solve the problems of the small retailer fail is that the study is made in a partial vacuum. What is carefully walled out is the influence of big business upon small. One specific form of this pressure today is the extension of huge chains into fields in which they did not operate before. This is a process which has been going on since the depression of the early thirties, but it is now accelerated by the drying up of many durable goods items for consumer use.

The big hard-goods chains, automobile accessory and tire chains, big drug chains and even groups of supermarkets are on the hunt for fast moving merchandise to replace the volume they are losing on refrigerators, tires,

radios, washing machines, automotive supplies, and the like. Naturally they look for goods that turn over rapidly, producing a high rate of net profit. That is why they are buying work clothing, men's shirts and slacks, hosiery, underwear, sports jackets. But these items are the very ones upon which the dry goods or general merchandise store depends for its existence. And while we have no general scarcity of textiles, yet no merchant today can buy all the men's shirts or all the knitted underwear he can sell, nor can he buy all the overalls or work shirts he bought in 1941.

What results is a larger number of stores carrying and trying to sell these commodities at a time when the supplies of consumer goods are being reduced. More outlets for less goods! Obviously, too, the chains which previously handled tires and other automotive and radio and house furnishings supplies, in addition to "soft" goods, must now rely more and more on apparel items to carry the load. Here we find such chains as Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward. But since all lines show reductions in supplies, even organi-

zations like F. W. Woolworth Co., J. C. Penney Co., and other general merchandise and syndicate store chains must also seek their volume now in fewer lines. A gigantic battle between chains now looms. Close to 20,000 new stores, which never carried such merchandise before, are now joining in the competition for the sales of apparel, household and various utility items still available.

IMAGINE a little child stumbling out upon a battlefield where armored divisions are slugging it out. That's the small retailer in this fracas. His chances of survival become slim indeed. To save one group of these merchants, the Senate Small Business Committee has introduced Rubber Tire Bill S.2560 which is now in the hands of the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency. This is an attempt to save the independent tire dealers, filling station and automotive supply houses by giving them exclusive distribution for the duration of the war emergency on tires, tubes, and tire repair materials. All Firestone stores, Goodrich Silvertown stores, as well as their



"What size does your wife wear?"

agencies, and all stores operated by such chains as Western Auto Supply Co. of Kansas City or Gamble-Skogmo of Minneapolis, would be unable to sell any tires or tubes.

There are two weaknesses in this bill. First is the fact that simply having tires and tubes to sell does not mean that the independent dealers can do enough business to stay alive. Secondly, of the chains mentioned above, a total of 1,500 stores are actually owned and operated by the companies themselves. All the rest of the stores in these chains are dealer-owned, and there are a total of over 80,000 of these independent merchants holding franchises from the four big chains.

Following the same logic the committee might now introduce a bill preventing stores from taking on lines which they have not handled before. This might protect the small dry goods store. But the very independent tire dealer whom the Rubber Tire Bill is designed to help is today either buying or contemplating the addition to his present lines of such "soft" goods as underwear, shirts, hosiery, work clothes, as well as house furnishings items like glassware, kitchen utensils, wall paper, house paints, and such miscellany as bric-a-brac, games, reprint editions of books, phonograph records, and scores of other products.

OBERVE how many lines of business are now affected by this development. In the struggle to survive, the boundaries between the various types of outlets become blurred or are obliterated. Surely this does not simplify the problem of the small retailer. When a large chain finds itself forced to take in apparel or house paints because the war has deprived it of refrigerators or tires to sell, shall we consider the small retailer who is driven into bankruptcy because of his new competition a war casualty? Or is he the victim of chain store competition? Or would he have been forced to close up in any event because of the diminishing volume he could do with his ever more limited supplies?

Does the search for a solution appear hopeless as the questions multiply? The fact is that we cannot even begin to grapple with the problem as long as we start out with the limited idea that we must "save" the small retailer. Put the problem back on its feet, look at it from the vantage point of a win-the-war resolution, and the outlines of a solution for the war period begin to emerge.

Victory demands a whole-souled effort. Estimates vary as to the number of men and women who are needed at home to supply the men on the firing line. Let us take the figure of the Management-Labor Policy Committee, from its report to the War Manpower Commission on November 10, which stated that 62,500,000 people, including the armed forces, will be required by our war program by the end of 1943. Now this civilian population must give its best in effort, in unremitting enthusiasm, and support for the drive to victory. That calls for the maintenance of a standard of living, a level of well-being, a minimum of creature comforts and diversions,

which will hold morale high and our spirits aflame.

This means that we need planning of production of essential supplies for the men, women, and children at home, as well as planning for direct war needs. Not only must these necessary civilian supplies be manufactured—or vital services maintained—but we must also make them available to *all* our people. The accident of wealth must not be permitted to decide who shall have and who shall be deprived of these established minima of well-being. Which means we must have national rationing of every necessity as well as vigorous price control.

But we cannot decide that the essentials for civilian life are to be made available without providing the channels through which these essentials are to be distributed. When a community is served by a general merchandise store, let us say, and restricted output reduces the volume of that store below the existence level, we must make a decision. If that store is necessary to the life of the community, and therefore contributes to civilian well-being essential for winning the war, then the retailer must be maintained in operation. We may even have to subsidize that store, but this merchant must continue to serve his neighbors *not* primarily because we want to save *him*, but because his fellow-citizens require his services.

A small retailer in a line of business which cannot be continued because the war effort has deprived him of merchandise to sell is entitled to the help of the nation. He is as much a sufferer from the war as though he had been bombed out. He should be able to close up his business and walk out without the onus of bankruptcy and without the debts and judgments of the failure hanging over him. For the direct war casualty we shall have to develop a scheme of liquidation loans.

ACTUALLY, with intelligent planning, government subsidies to keep retailers in business will scarcely be necessary. Retailers can lower their costs of operation. The wholesalers of the country operate on an average cost of over twelve percent. A chain store warehouse operates at an average cost of around four percent. But a chain store warehouse corresponds in function to a wholesaler. Therefore wholesalers' costs must be brought down and the savings passed on to the retailer. This is necessary for the salvation of the wholesaler as well as the storekeeper. All along the line frills can be eliminated, assortments of goods reduced and simplified, expensive services canned for the duration. Direct-from-factory shipments must come to the stores at reduced cost. Consider that the distribution costs of manufacturers range from around ten percent of net sales in textiles to as high as thirty-eight percent in drugs. Surely this can be slashed. Must the consumer pay today, as he did in 1938, fifty-nine cents out of every dollar for distribution and only forty-one cents for production of the commodities he buys? Let's use some horse sense. If we are

going to produce fewer commodities for civilian use, why must manufacturers and distributors exert expensive selling efforts?

One type of distributor should grow in importance these days. That is the wholesale cooperative, the jobber who is owned by the retailer he serves. This is an efficient and low-cost type of distribution and can play an enormous role in keeping essential small retailers alive and financially sound.

AND we cannot use our horse sense until we have an over-all plan. Naturally, under our system, until each producer knows exactly how much he may manufacture, he is going to turn out as much as he can and drive ahead to sell his goods against his competition. What we need is the planning which the Tolan committee's Sixth Interim Report demands and which is provided for in the Tolan-Kilgore-Pepper Bill. It is significant that Sen. James E. Murray, chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, was among the congressional committee heads who recently endorsed that bill. The planning we need for victory will also embrace the concept that wartime distribution, as well as manufacture of essential commodities, must be maintained at rock-bottom cost and must be made the concern of the agencies responsible for mobilizing the people fully behind the war. From such planning will arise the solution of the problems of the small businessman and particularly of the small retailer during wartime.

In the determination of standards of civilian well-being as well as in the decisions as to which distributors are essential, we should have both national and local committees composed of wholesalers, retailers, labor and consumer representatives.

All-out planning for victory involves control of inventories, to assure all essential retailers of stocks of necessary commodities. It calls for rationing of all must-for-living articles. It means planning for efficient manpower distribution which in turn will provide jobs in war production for superfluous retailers and their employees. The four filling stations at the cross-roads may have to be reduced to one. Committees of local jurisdiction should be able to make these decisions with wisdom and with justice. Liquidation loans can be based on replacement cost of inventories. True, landlords have to be taken into account and some settlement of unfulfilled leases may have to be made. In any event, no one is to be enriched by these payments, no one is to be retired to leisure.

What emerges clearly from a study of the problems of the small retailer in wartime is the urgent need of a genuine people's war economy. We need planned production and manpower utilization, we need at the same time planning for civilian livelihood and morale. It is in this connection that the small retailer moves with purpose and has meaning in his being. We need not permit the workings of our war economy to turn Main Street into a vast cemetery for small retailers.

FRANK J. WALLACE.

I GIVE YOU MY WORD . . . by JOSEPH NORTH

THOUGHTS ON A SUNDAY MORNING

MILLIONS of picas go into it; it is a matter of infinite ems. It is a jargon of halftones and linecuts, caps, subheads and italics; Roman and Gothic, Bodoni and Caslon; the terminology is endless. I have been in workshops where dynamos are created and the same cool craft of many men is manifest in the printroom where the magazine is born amid the screaming presses. It springs to life every seven days; Mack trucks are in at the birth-pangs. They speed the picas, the ems, the linecuts, the caps, subheads, and italics to the locomotives and it goes to all ends of the earth. It is a magazine; some men named it *NEW MASSES*.

Forgive me if I talk exultingly of it, perhaps passionately. This time I cannot help it. I know I will say what many feel. A thousand times in this decade that I have worked with it I have wanted to say something like this about it; perhaps as a lover wants to talk of his sweetheart. But when I read the letter this week of the guerrilla warrior to Ruth McKenney I couldn't help it. So bear with me, please.

We work all week, month in, month out, a thousand harassing details cross our desks; this special delivery, that telegram, this deadline, that bill. We feel the oppression of inadequacy; the world is fast, furious, and is it here? In these pages? We lack this story, we need that one; can we get it? Have we found the truth of that problem? thrown light on this issue?

Too often we have not. But each week when the magazine comes fresh from the printer we hold it in our hands, go over each page, fondly, critically (never coldly, for we know what went on in that man's head, in that bare room, in that wild battlefield—things that echo in these thirty-two pages). And when something comes like the letter from the Leningrad woman who has just wrestled with death, to the Washington woman who has just seen life quicken at her side, we feel there is no magazine in the world quite like this named *NEW MASSES*.

LISTEN: some months ago Ruth wrote a piece. A brief piece, not long, maybe a page, but packed in it was Ruth and what we have come to associate with her, a lusty love of life and the rich Irish expression typical of her kinfolk. It was a simple story, simple as real life is simple. Something about Ruth and her family packing a box to send to the Red Army. Nothing more. The phenomenon of picas and ems and halftones and linecuts crossed the oceans, passed through the submarine lanes, traveled around Hell's Corner where the Messerschmitts and

Junkers zoom, reached the Arctic port of Murmansk, went down the road to Moscow. Then a group of editors, also harassed, also beset with multitudinous detail, get it translated; it goes into the Soviet magazine *International Literature*. A Leningrad girl named Alexandra, a guerrilla warrior, lying in a hospital convalescent from a wound suffered in the greatest battle of all time, reads it, this matter of a thousand words written by a woman ten thousand miles off. She reads and is moved to answer. And the letter travels back, ten thousand miles, and today—you thumb through your thirty-two pages of a magazine called *NEW MASSES*—and you meet a girl named Alexandra; she tells you that she has not long to live; she tells you that she is not afraid to die because she knows why she has lived and why she has fought and why she will die. And you say to yourself, to her, "Alexandra, dear, I heard you talking. I understand. I will keep faith."

IN ONE way or another it happens every week; we sit in our office on the twelfth floor, answer the phone, send the wires, mark the copy, deal with ems and halftones, and we are dealing with the lives and dreams, the pain and the magnificent heroism of men and women. We are, if worth our salt, endlessly grateful for the opportunity to deal with the multitudinous details—the ems and the picas and the bills—so long as the end result depicts, and helps mold, the aspirations of men. We are humble at the great responsibility; realizing how small we are in the face of that responsibility. For the magazine is a thing of big principles, not a mere thing of writers and editors. It is significant so long as it marches with history, so long as it helps, in whatever way it can, to point the path of that march. And to some degree, certainly to a greater degree than most of its contemporaries, it has kept pace with history.

Had it not, could Alvah Bessie have written:

"In Spain we used to get *NEW MASSES* sent from home. It was astonishing to see the guys fight for this magazine, give each other cigarettes they didn't have—just to get the first chance to read it. And if we didn't get a chance to finish it, we carried it in our pack-sacks till after the next action was over. Did you ever hear of such a thing? A man going into battle with a magazine in his pack? Well, we did it, and I've seen copies of *NEW MASSES* stained with the blood of good comrades wounded or killed in action."

Had it not, would that lonely coal miner in a God-forsaken place called Chicken, Alaska, have left *NEW MASSES* a legacy of his life-savings last year, a matter of seventy-seven dollars?

Had it not, could our magazine have been in correspondence with Alexandra, the heroine?

I THOUGHT of all that, this Sunday morning, walking with my two children in the snow. I thought of Alexandra and the millions like her, our brothers and sons, the lads from Pittsburgh, from Detroit, from Spokane, from Chungking, from London, slogging in the mud, in the snow, marching across the burning sands. They walk with death so that you and I may walk with our children.

I looked at Dan and Suzy, thinking: "How many dear friends you have whose names you have never heard; men and women are dying this moment for you, for me, as we walk in the quiet, in this peaceful snow." Like Ruth, I thought of Alexandra and I felt that in the name of our children, we shall keep the faith.

I MET STALIN

The "discovery" of the great Soviet leader. Anna Louise Strong describes the man who leads close to 200,000,000 people. "I found him the easiest person to talk to I ever met."

On December 21 all the free world joined in wishing happy birthday to Joseph Stalin, who was born sixty-three years ago in the little town of Gori in that part of the czarist empire which was formerly the oppressed nation of Georgia. This son of a poor cobbler and a peasant woman, who became head of the first socialist state, is today universally acclaimed as one of the great figures of history whose leadership is written large in the magnificent fight of the Soviet army and people against the Nazi invaders. On this occasion NEW MASSES is publishing by special permission an extract from the chapter on Stalin in Anna Louise Strong's book, The Soviets Expected It.—The Editors.

YEARS AGO, when I first lunched with President Roosevelt just after he had seen H. G. Wells, I found that of all the subjects in the Soviet Union the one that interested him the most was the personality of Stalin and especially the technique of "Stalin's rule." It is a natural interest; I think it interests most Americans. The unbroken rise of Stalin's prestige for twenty years both within the Soviet Union and beyond its borders is really worth attention by students of politics.

Yet most of the American press brags of its ignorance of Stalin by frequently alluding to the "enigmatic ruler in the Kremlin." Cartoons and innuendo have been used to create the legend of a crafty, bloodthirsty dictator who even strives to involve the world in war and chaos so that something called "Bolshevism" may gain. This preposterous legend will shortly die.

Since the German-Soviet war began, Stalin has become chief of the army and government. He will see more foreigners now. He made a good beginning with Harry Hopkins and W. Averill Harriman. They seem to have been impressed! I know how they were impressed for I also met Stalin.

WHEN I met Stalin, I did not find him enigmatic. I found him the easiest person to talk to I ever met. He is far and away the best committee chairman of my experience. He can bring everybody's views out and combine them in the minimum of time. His method of running committees reminded me somewhat of Jane Addams of Hull House or Lillian D. Wald of Henry Street Settlement. They had the same kind of democratically efficient technique, but they used more high pressure than Stalin did.

If Stalin has been inaccessible to foreigners—there were exceptions even to this—that does not mean that he lived in isolation, in a sort of Kremlin ivory tower. There were close to 200,000,000 people keeping

him busy. He was seeing a lot of them. Not always necessarily the Party leaders. A milkmaid who had broken the milking record, a scientist who had broken the atom, an aviator who flew to America, a coal miner who invented a new labor process, a workman with a housing difficulty, an engineer balked by new conditions—any person representing either a signal achievement or a typical problem might be invited by Stalin to talk it over. That was the way he got his data and kept in touch with the movement of the country.

That, I realized afterward, was why Stalin saw me. For nearly ten years I had liked his country and tried to succeed there, for nearly two I had organized and tried to edit a little weekly newspaper for other Americans who had come to work for the Five Year Plan. And what with censorship, red tape, and what seemed the wanton emergence of another competing weekly, I wanted to give up. A Russian friend suggested that I complain to Stalin. I did. Three days later his office called me up and suggested that I come down and talk it over with "some responsible comrades."

I expected to see some fairly high official at the Party headquarters, and was rather stunned when the auto drove straight to the Kremlin and especially when I entered a large conference room and saw not only Stalin rising to greet me, but Kaganovich and Voroshilov too!

My first impression of him was vaguely disappointing. A stocky figure in a simple suit of khaki color, direct, unassuming, whose first concern was to know whether I understood Russian sufficiently to take part in discussion. Not very imposing for so great a man, I thought. Then we sat down rather casually, and Stalin was not even at the head of the table; Voroshilov was. Stalin took a place where he could see all our faces and started the talk by a pointed question to the man against whom I had complained. After that Stalin seemed to become a sort of background, against which other people's comments went on. The brilliant wit of Kaganovich, the cheerful chuckle of Voroshilov, the characteristics of the lesser people called to consult, all suddenly stood out. I began to understand them all and like them; I even began to understand the editor against whom I had complained. Suddenly I myself was talking and getting my facts out faster and more clearly than I ever did in my life. People seemed to agree with me. Everything got to the point very fast and smoothly, with Stalin saying less than anyone.

Afterward in thinking it over I realized how Stalin's genius for listening helped each of us express ourselves and understand the

others. I recalled his trick of repeating a word of mine either with questioning intonation or a slight emphasis, which suddenly made me feel I had either not quite seen the point or perhaps had overstated it, and so drove me to make it plainer. I recalled how he had done this to others also. Then I understood that his listening had been a dynamic force.

THIS listening habit dates back to the early days of his revolutionary career. "I remember him very well from the early days of our Party," said a veteran Bolshevik to me. "A quiet youth who sat at the edge of the committee, saying almost nothing, but listening very much. Toward the end he would make a few comments, sometimes merely as questions. Gradually we came to see that he always summed up best our joint thinking." The description will be recognized by anyone who ever met Stalin. In any group he is usually last to express his opinion. He does not want to block the full expression of others, as he might easily do by speaking first. Besides this, he is always learning by listening.

"He listens even to the way the grass grows," said a Soviet citizen to me.

On the data thus gathered, Stalin forms conclusions, not "alone in the night," which Emil Ludwig said was Mussolini's way, but in conference and discussion. Even in interviews he seldom receives the interviewer alone; Molotov, Voroshilov, or Kaganovich are likely to be about. Probably he does not even grant an interview without discussing it first with his closest comrades. This is a habit he formed very early. In the days of the underground revolutionary movement, he grew accustomed to close teamwork with comrades who held each other's lives in their hands. In order to survive, they must learn to agree quickly and unanimously, to feel each other's instincts, to guess even at a distance each other's brains.

If I should explain Stalin to politicians, I should call him a superlatively good committeeman. Is this too prosaic a term for the leader of 200,000,000 people? I might call him instead a far-seeing statesman; this also is true. But more important than Stalin's genius is the fact that it is expressed through good committee work. His talent for cooperative action is more significant for the world than the fact that he is great.

Soviet people have a way of putting it which sounds rather odd to Americans. "Stalin does not think individually," they say. It is the exact opposite of the "rugged individualist" ideal. But they mean it as the very highest compliment. They mean that Stalin thinks not only with his own brain



JOSEPH STALIN

drawing by HUGO GELLERT

but in consultation with the brains of the Academy of Science, the chiefs of industry, the Congress of Trade Unions, the Party leaders. Scientists use this way of thinking; so do good trade unionists. They do not "think individually"; they do not rely on the conclusions of a single brain.

Soviet people never speak of "Stalin's will" or "Stalin's orders"; they speak of "government orders" and "the Party line," which are decisions produced collectively. But they speak very much of "Stalin's method" as a method that everyone should learn. It is the method of getting swift decisions out of the brains of many people, the method of good committee work.

Stalin brings certain important qualities to these joint decisions. People who meet him are first of all impressed by his directness and simplicity, his swift approach. Next they notice his clearness and objectivity in handling questions. He completely lacks Hitler's emotional hysteria and Mussolini's cocky self-assertion; he does not thrust himself into the picture. Gradually one becomes aware of his keen analysis, his colossal knowledge, his grip of world politics, his willingness to face facts, and especially his long view, which fits the problem into history, judging not only its immediate factors, but its past and future too.

Stalin's rise to power came rather slowly. The rise of his type is slow and sure. It began far back with his study of human history and especially the history of revolutions. President Roosevelt commented to me with surprise on Stalin's knowledge of the Cromwellian Revolution in Britain as shown in his talk with H. G. Wells. But Stalin quite naturally studied both the British and the American historical revolutions far more intimately than British and American politicians do. Czarist Russia was due for a revolution. Stalin intended to be in it and help give it form. He made himself a thorough scientist on the process of history from the Marxian viewpoint: how the masses of people live, how their industrial technique and social forms develop, how social classes arise and struggle, how they succeed. Stalin analyzed and compared all past revolutions.

TWENTY years ago in the Russian civil war, Stalin's instinct for the feeling of the common people more than once helped the Soviet armies to victory. The best known of these moments was the dispute between Stalin and Trotsky about an advance through the North Caucasus. Trotsky wanted to take the shortest military route. Stalin pointed out that this shortcut lay across the unfriendly lands of the Cossacks and would in the end prove longer and bloodier. He chose a somewhat roundabout way through working class cities and friendly farming regions, where the common people rose to help the Red Armies instead of opposing them. The contrast was typical; it has been illustrated since then by twenty years of history. Stalin is completely at home in the handling of social forces, as is shown by his call today for a

"people's war" in the rear of the German armies. He knows how to arouse the terrible force of an angry people, how to organize it, and release it to gain the people's desires.

Stalin's great moment when he first appeared as leader of the whole Soviet people was when, as Chairman of the Constitutional Commission, he presented the new Constitution of the Socialist State. A commission of thirty-one of the country's ablest historians, economists, and political scientists had been instructed to create "the world's most democratic constitution" with the most accurate machinery yet devised for obtaining "the will of the people." They spent a year and a half in detailed study of every past constitution in the world, not only of governments but of trade unions and voluntary societies. The draft that they prepared was then discussed by the Soviet people for several months in more than 500,000 meetings attended by 36,500,000 people. The number of suggested amendments that reached the Constitutional Commission from the popular discussions was 154,000. Stalin himself is known to have read tens of thousands of the people's letters.

Two thousand people sat in the great white hall of the Kremlin Palace when Stalin made his report to the Congress of Soviets. Among the dozen or more amendments which Stalin personally discussed, he approved of those that facilitated democratic expression and disapproved of those that limited democracy. Some people felt, for instance, that the different constituent republics should not be granted the right to secede from the Soviet Union; Stalin said that, while they probably would not want to secede, their right to do so should be constitutionally guaranteed as an assertion of democracy. A fairly large number of people wanted to refuse political rights to the priests lest they influence politics unduly. "The time has come to introduce universal suffrage without limitation," said Stalin, arguing that the Soviet people were now mature enough to know their own minds.

More important for us today than constitutional forms, or even the question of how they work, was one very significant note in Stalin's speech. He ended by a direct challenge to the growing Nazi threat in Europe. Speaking on Nov. 25, 1936, before Hitlerism was seriously opposed by any European government, Stalin called the new Soviet Constitution "an indictment against Fascism, an indictment which says that Socialism and Democracy are invincible."

GLIMPSES of Stalin's personal relations come chiefly through his contacts with picturesque figures who have helped make Soviet history. The best tale, I think, is that about Marie Demchenko, because it shows Stalin's idea of leaders and of how they are produced. Marie was a peasant woman who came to a farm congress in Moscow and made a personal pledge to Stalin, then sitting on the platform, that her brigade of women would produce twenty tons of beets per acre that year. It was a spectacular promise, since the

average yield in the Ukraine was about five tons.

Marie's challenge started a competition among the Ukrainian sugar beet growers; it was featured by the Soviet press. The whole country followed with considerable excitement Marie's fight against a pest of moths. The nation watched the local fire department bring twenty thousand pails of water to the field to beat the drought. They saw the gang of women weed the fields nine times and clear them eight times of insects. Marie finally got twenty-one tons per acre, while the best of her competitors got twenty-three.

That harvest was a national event. So Marie's whole gang went to Moscow to visit Stalin at the autumn celebration. The newspapers treated them like movie stars and featured their conversation. Stalin asked Marie what she most wanted as a reward for her own good record and for stirring up all the other sugar beet growers. Marie replied that she wanted most of all to come to Moscow and see "the leaders."

"But now you yourselves are leaders," said Stalin to Marie.

"Well, yes," said Marie, "but we wanted to see you anyway." Her final request, which was granted, was to study in an agricultural university.

WHEN the German war was launched against the Soviet Union, many foreigners were surprised that Stalin did not make a speech to arouse the people at once. Some of our more sensational papers assumed that Stalin had fled! Soviet people knew that Stalin trusted them to do their jobs and that he would sum the situation up for them as soon as it crystallized. He did it at dawn on July 3 in a radio talk. The words with which he began were very significant.

"Comrades! Citizens!" he said, as he has said often. Then he added, "Brothers and Sisters!" It was the first time Stalin ever used in public those close family words. To everyone who heard them, those words meant that the situation was very serious, that they must now face the ultimate test together and that they must be closer and dearer to each other than they had ever been before. It meant that Stalin wanted to put a supporting arm across their shoulders, giving them strength for the task they had to do.

Erskine Caldwell, reporting that dawn from Moscow, said that tremendous crowds stood in the city squares listening to the loud speakers, "holding their breath in such profound silence that one could hear every inflection of Stalin's voice." Twice during the speech, even the sound of water being poured into a glass could be heard as Stalin stopped to drink. For several minutes after Stalin had finished the silence continued. Then a motherly-looking woman said, "He works so hard, I wonder when he finds time to sleep. I am worried about his health."

That was the way that Stalin took the Soviet people into the test of war.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG.



THE SHIPS SAIL ON

The peoples of the world are grateful to the men who refuse to say die. Sally Alford reviews Robert Carse's two recent books. The story of "The Unconquered."

THERE GO THE SHIPS, by Robert Carse. Morrow. \$2.

THE UNCONQUERED, by Robert Carse. McBride. \$2.50.

NONE MORE COURAGEOUS, by Stewart H. Holbrook. Macmillan. \$2.50.

THE types of heroism and the opportunities for it that emerge from a people's war are, obviously, as various as people themselves and the physical features of the earth. From the convoys off the North Cape to the jungles of South Sea islands, the people are not only on the march: they're fighting their way through.

Readers of NEW MASSES have already had an opportunity of reading short, partial accounts of the famous convoy that got through to Murmansk late last spring, but that is no reason for thinking that we know all about it and therefore skipping *There Go the Ships*. Robert Carse has several advantages over the other writers: he is a professional seaman; he is a professional writer; he has a full-length canvas on which to work.

Given the undoubted ability and desperate immediacy and urgency of the writing, it is the rounded term of the voyage—from safety through terror to safety—that gives the book some of the impact it has. We meet the crew of the *So-and-So* when they signed on in New York—"Just a simple bunch of guys that you'd find in any union hall or along any dock in an American port"—to take a load of TNT to Murmansk. We follow them through the first fairly peaceful days aboard, thinking of their homes and wives and kids, trimming down to size any of their shipmates who were a little self-important. There is the discipline and training of convoy sailing, and shore leave among the kindly folk of Scotland, where merchant seamen are recognized for the fighters they are. It was in that Scottish port that the *So-and-So* received her guns, four double-mount Marlin 30-caliber pieces, of 1918 issue. The deck men got a few instructions in handling them on the target, clearing jams, and using the sights. With that equipment and knowledge, the "simple bunch of guys" stood off for Iceland, the North Cape, and Murmansk.

IT WAS somewhere among the ice and fog off the North Cape that the planes came. The first were the big Focke-Wulf Condors, whose job was to give the convoy's position to the land-based fighter planes in Norway. For nine days and nights (not that there was

much of a night, there above the Arctic Circle) they hung in the sky just out of range, and then came the Messerschmitt 110's, and a day or so later, the Heinkel 11's, the Stukas, the Junker 89's. For the six days and nights after that, continuously, the planes did everything that planes in war can do: high altitude bombing, dive bombing, torpedoing, machine gunning. For six days and nights, Able Seaman Carse and his mates hung onto the guns, shaken by near bombs, spattered by shrapnel and bullets. They watched ships with friends aboard break in half and go down, or burst into flame, or be blown to fragments. Even without direct hits, the *So-and-So* had taken such a pounding that the plates loosened, water was gaining against the pumps, the ammonia tanks in the engine room were leaking, and they abandoned ship. But the Chief Engineer discovered that she could still sail, so back aboard they went, dizzy with weariness, and back to the guns they went, and they fought her through to Murmansk.

But even there, in the friendly Russian town, while the trucks being unloaded reached the dock with the motors running and set off at once for the front, the ships were not safe. Nazi planes, based in poor little Finland, came over day after day, and the *So-and-So* finally got it and went down, in spite of the crew, Russian tugs, and a British minesweeper, and the crew was split up among a number of other American vessels.



Robert Carse

For twenty-eight days they lay there in the river, making friends among the Russians ashore, and then set out for the voyage home: another inferno of planes, bombs, fighting, and a final submarine attack off Iceland that got the Panamanian ship in which some of their former shipmates were, although no lives were lost.

The Nazis gave up after Iceland; the crew had nothing much to do but get "goofy for the shore." "But," says Seaman Carse, "because we were seamen, we began to talk of our next ship, our next trip. The *So-and-So* was a National Maritime Union ship, and those men, through the instruction of their leaders, were aware of the necessity for keeping their ships at sea." But no simple bunch of guys, no matter what sort of heroes they turn out to be, can do it alone, and they knew it. As they were running down the river for their pier, "people riding in their cars along the shore drive stared out at us, our signal flags, and hooded guns. We wondered if they knew where we'd been, what we'd seen and experienced. It was good to tell ourselves that they did, for if they didn't, we, as a nation, were lost."

Thanks to *There Go the Ships* and its courageous author, we do know, and we will not forget.

DEDICATED to the anti-fascist prisoners of Le Vernet, *The Unconquered* tells the stories of a number of other simple bunches of guys in occupied Europe: the underground fighters. The incidents are based on actual occurrences but presented in short story form, thus acquiring simultaneously the emotional values of fiction and of fact. We encounter here the courageous fighters of Norway, Holland, France, Spain, Yugoslavia, Poland, in vivid and dramatic excerpts from the continual courage and drama of their lives.

In Norway, for instance, there is Anna Toht, who fought with the Free Corps men, tended the wounded—including English and Russian flyers who had been shot down—and piloted them off to England in an old fishing vessel. But she didn't rest with being safe; she attended the guerrilla school and returned to Norway with ammunition and knowledge to continue the struggle. In Holland the underground organization aids Mason, the British pilot, to steal a plane and get back home. The Belgian miner Nestor Gervais kills a Gestapo colonel in the mine and escapes with

his carrier pigeon and joins the French underground. The elderly French count can no longer endure the men of Vichy, shelters a man escaped from Le Vernet, and joins the underground to get out a newspaper for the district he knows and loves.

"The people of Europe fight, and among them are . . ." Garcia Nunez, the Spanish boy who used the dynamite hidden by the loyalists to blow up a train loaded with wheat for Germany. There is the Grecian grandmother who got her grandchildren and the two wounded British flyers away for Egypt. Dragutin Miracs, the Chetnik, stands off a siege in which his comrades are killed, and lives to fight on. In Czechoslovakia Vaclav Frantsek, after living through a going-over by the Gestapo, organizes sabotage squads in industrial plants all over the country. Polish anti-Nazis escape from a prison camp, seize a German stronghold in a large forest, and carry on as guerrillas.

The people of Europe fight, and Mr. Carse has presented that fight in skillful and stirring terms.

THE people of America also fight, but I think that unfortunate is the kindest word that can be applied to Stewart Holbrook's recital (*None More Courageous*) of the exploits of our heroes in the early months after Pearl Harbor. He relies, of course, too much on news dispatches and official citations, but even granting the lack of eye-witness material, there is still a tendency to oversimplification, a sort of Rover-Boys-in-the-South-Pacific approach, a complete lack of any indication of what the war is about, and an emphasis on purely physical deeds with no feeling for the kind of people these were. They got medals, therefore they were heroes, and that's that. He seems to regard as equally important the action of Lieutenant O'Hare, who in a Grumman Wildcat calmly shot down nine Japanese bombers and returned to the carrier he had saved, and of Lieut. Frank Fenno, who took a lot of gold from Manila to Hawaii.

I have no wish to belittle the courage and intelligence of our flyers like Colin Kelly and Hewitt Wheless; or the somewhat grim humor of Capt. Arthur Wermuth, the One-Man Army of Bataan, who spent his time thinking up dangerous and ingenious ways of disposing of Japs; or the spirit, for which there is no adjective, that kept the expendables of the Motor Torpedo Boat squadron sailing and fighting until their boats were shot out from under them. My quarrel is only with Mr. Holbrook's treatment of the war as though it were a game of cowboys and Indians.

If you are apt to forget what, exactly, our various fighters did to become heroes in the early months of the war, this might be a handy book to have on the reference shelf, but for something to make you come up out of your corner fighting, you'd do better to read Robert Carse's story of the Murmansk convoy twice.

SALLY ALFORD.

Tenjo's Japan

THE THREE BAMBOOS, by Robert Standish. Macmillan. \$2.75.

ROBERT STANDISH has written an historical novel about the rise of the Fureno family. "It is the story of the rise of modern Japan itself." That story begins in about 1850. The head of the family, the Elder Fureno, had two great ambitions: (1) to restore his family of forty-odd generations of Samurai to its hereditary importance in Japan, and, (2) to gain for Japan the respect of her neighbors and to ward off encroachments from the Western powers, whose interests in the East he had become aware of. These ambitions he conceives of as a fulfillment of his noble family's obligations to his ancestors: they unite the traditional sentiments of family honor and racial pride. But the man who is to fulfill them is his eldest son, Tenjo, and he so far overshoots the mark that the Elder Fureno can never reconcile Tenjo's works with the honorable principles of the Samurai.

The Elder Fureno represents the chivalric elements in the Samurai tradition which the rise of Japanese capitalism made archaic. To Tenjo he had transmitted his paternal authority in the Fureno clan. It is Tenjo who organizes the great network of industries, steamship lines, and banks through which Japan crosses over from feudalism to capitalism. Another son, Arika, becomes a general and a military hero in the seizure of Korea: he carries on the ideas of honor of his father. But the needs of Tenjo's growing industrial empire determine national policy now, not the honor of aggrieved generals, sensitive to the opinions of their ancestors. To effectuate his policy, Tenjo orders the assassination of Arika. Arika's defense of his honor consists of leading his generals in a mass commission of hara-kiri in a public square in Tokyo.

This act, ironically sanctifying the "honor" of the Fureno family, is an unmistakable symbol that the control of Japanese "destiny" had passed into the hands of men like Tenjo. The full history of three generations of Furenos, as Mr. Standish tells the story, confirms this fact, that the dream of world dominion evolved from the subordination of the military aristocracy to the economic masters of Japan. It is true that conscription was introduced into Japan as early as 1872; twenty years later the Japanese had a good, tough army. But to argue that Japanese aggression has its origin in the war-like character of the people and the cultist sword-play of the Samurai is foolish. An obedient military organized the people for war in accordance with the far-reaching plans of the real statesmen of Japan—men like Tenjo who had "made" the country what it was. In the last phase of the execution of these plans there was a coalescence of the two groups into an actual dictatorship: but without the bankers the military clique would have had no basis for a policy.

The career of Tenjo encompasses the rise of Japan from feudal obscurity to rapacious

imperialism; indeed, in the novel, he is the active power behind this transition. Historically, of course, he represents the growth of the capitalist class in Japan—the class which organized the social upheaval and transformed the country, through its central control of economic, military, and political life, into the power that is now playing out its last great gamble.

If the historian objects to the book because it is fiction, or the critic because it is history, it can only be pointed out that fact and fiction meet in the story of the Fureno family in a particularly significant way. Here is an historical novel in which the meaning of the events carries right into the present. Here is simplification of history without distortion. Disbelief in the idea that this is possible is only a proof of the rarity of its achievement.

ALAN BENOIT.

Conquistador

THE KNIGHT OF EL DORADO, by German Arciniegas. Viking. \$3.

OF ALL the Spanish-speaking countries, Colombia is most noted for the culture of its ruling and upper middle classes; and no more typical representative of this culture could be found than in the person of German Arciniegas, diplomat, educator (now Minister of Education), liberal politician, journalist, and creative essayist. Arciniegas, moreover, is typical not only of Colombian culture, but the culture of liberal members of his class throughout the southern Americas. By observing the workings of his agile, at times somewhat too facile, mind one may gain considerable insight into the psychology of that class, upon which the democratic forces of North America and the world must now lean so heavily if the Western Hemisphere is to be kept free and un-Hitlerized.

The Knight of El Dorado, however, is of interest and importance by reason of its subject as well as its author. In this sprightly biography Arciniegas discovers for us an overlooked and all but forgotten conquistador, one who deserves to take his place with Cortes and Pizarro, as he doubtless will hereafter. Don Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada was the conqueror of the Colombian plateau and, along with a couple of other fantastic adventurers, founded the present capital of Bogota. He was something of a Don Quixote in the flesh; and our author believes that Cervantes may actually have taken him as a model for his immortal character. But there is no point in retelling the story here. To get the flavor, you must read it for yourself. In these vividly written, rapid-moving pages, which give a pretty good picture of the big-bellied, adventurous, unscrupulous "Age of Gold" that formed the background to the Spanish conquest.

Senor Arciniegas tells his story with a great deal of verve and aplomb, and with a certain hard intentness on social and psychological real-

ism of the I'm-not-to-be-fooled variety that is at times faintly reminiscent of our own hard-boiled "debunking" school of historical writing of the 1920's. This realism, to tell the truth, is a bit too obvious, too flaunted, too striven-for; it does not ring quite true. Beneath the glittering surface you will find a core of philosophic idealism, representing a disease that is extremely prevalent among Latin American intellectuals of Arciniegas' class. In his case, this is inclined to take the form of a conceptualism of the Spanish Unamuno-esque variety, which might be defined as building an imposing ideational structure on a cloud-land of airy nothings. Nevertheless you are bound to enjoy German Arciniegas. To make his acquaintance means a real step toward understanding the Latin American mind.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Poems against Hitler

UNTERGRUND, by Hans Marchwitza. 50c.

HANS MARCHWITZA, whose *Wetterleuchten* included some of the most powerful of German anti-fascist poems, has produced a second volume, which, like the first, sums up the history of the underground in poetry of extraordinary bare directness. Mr. Marchwitza's particular gift is for compressing years of heroic experience into an almost epigrammatic brevity. His poems are slogans in themselves, without ceasing to be poetry of a high order. The dedication of *Untergrund* is a case in point; in eight lines he has summed up the primary necessity of this war:

Against Hitler

*Many men will march with you.
Teach them how to hold a gun.
Teach them what our dead men knew
Before they had to leave the sun.*

*Say this to all, to all, to all:
Only in blood will his kingdom fall.
Carve it into every mind;
This the dying left behind.*

(translation by J. D.)

The power to express abstractions in poetry is very rare; Mr. Marchwitza is one of the few who can do it without becoming didactic. But he is not limited to these iron statements. There is imaginative breath and tenderness in the picture of the little houses of Lidice dreaming in the sunlight—this is the best of the many Lidice poems I have seen. The Czechoslovakian town suggests to him many of the small German mining towns he has known; the men starting for work, the wives leaning out of the window, calling anxiously, "Haven't you forgotten something?" The old are bowed with worries, the young are full of dreams. As Lidice was smashed by Hitler, so were the mining towns broken. In each the same people suffer; for each the same penalty will be exacted.

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SIGHTS and SOUNDS

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

The performance and background to Mozart's "Magic Flute" and Wagner's "Goetterdaemmerung." Mozart was in tune with 1789 and Wagner reflected the failure of 1848.

THIS year the Metropolitan Opera Company squeezed two monumental German operas into its opening week and has repeated them since: the charming and happy "Magic Flute" by Mozart and the ominous and tragic "Dusk of the Gods" (*Goetterdaemmerung*) by Wagner. The first represents the beginning of German opera; the other, in a way, its culmination, a difference which is expressed in the extreme contrast of plot, dramatic action, philosophy, and music. The "Magic Flute," written in 1791, two years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, expresses the ideals of truth and brotherly love which were widespread among the progressive middle class and allied elements of Europe and America during the period of Enlightenment. The "Dusk of the Gods," based on a revised text originally written in 1848, was composed in the seventies. To a certain extent it expresses a sense of futile achievement stemming from the failure of the bourgeois Revolution of 1848 and the success of a German empire established under semi-feudal military leadership.

Unlike Mozart's previous operas, the story and form of the "Magic Flute" trace their ancestry to the various folk operas or *Singspiele*, popular among the masses of Vienna and elsewhere at that time. The text was written in German (not in Italian as was the custom in Grand Opera) by a first rate showman, Schikaneder, who had put on many successful *Singspiele* and popular pageants. Another middle class artist by the name of Giesecke, who later became a professor of geology in Dublin, Ireland, also is assumed to have had a hand in the text. The first rate showman and the first rate composer produced a first rate pageant-opera or rather *Singspiel*.

Since Schikaneder was bankrupt at the moment—and Mozart had lost most of the support he once had enjoyed from the aristocracy—both were out to write a successful opera that would have popular appeal and make money. And they succeeded. Like the *Volk-singspiele* from which the "Magic Flute" is derived, the text portrays all aspects of human life, thus giving Mozart a rare opportunity to express the whole gamut of human emotions in musical form. Because he succeeded so masterfully in writing everything from the simplest folk tune to the sublimest temple aria in this work, both Beethoven and Wagner called it "the greatest German opera." And today the music has lost none of its charm.

There were many folkplays and operas at that time dealing with magic instru-

ments, like harps and zithers, which gave their bearers supernatural powers. Mozart chose the flute, even though he disliked the instrument, probably because its charming surface sadness and its arabesque-like agility greatly appealed to eighteenth century musical taste. But what was more important, the extraordinary powers of the magic flute were used to lead the bearer into the temples of truth and virtue against the vain machinations of the Queen of the Night, the symbol of superstition and evil. This gave the opera a political aspect, for these ideas were part of the ideology of the middle class in its struggle against the old regime, and of the Freemasons in particular, of which both Mozart and Schikaneder were ardent members. It must be remembered that many of the ideas of the period of Enlightenment found organized expression in the ceremonies and symbols of Freemasonry which tended to supplant the rituals of the established church. Mozart took his activities very seriously and wrote many fine compositions for various lodges until his death in 1791. At the same time he gradually ceased composing church music except under financial duress. (The American Masons might do a "good deed" by giving some public concerts of the music Mozart once wrote for them.)

THE "Magic Flute" was written during the late spring and summer of 1791, at a time when the reactionary Leopold II, who had come to the throne, began to suppress the progressive Freemasons. It received its first performance on Sept. 30, 1791, two months before Mozart's death on December 5. It soon became a great success, receiving many hundreds of performances at one of the folk theaters in the middle and lower class suburbs of Vienna. Only in 1801 did the Royal Theater condescend to perform it. Goethe, a fellow Mason, was so enchanted by both text and music that he began writing a sequel—which, however, remained uncompleted.

Of course, it must be remembered that the eighteenth century ideal of the brotherhood of man developed within the framework of an evolving bourgeois society. This helps explain the otherwise disconcerting fact that in the temple of Virtue there are slaves, that the Negro, Monostatos, is a comic figure, although with a tragic slant, and that Papagena represents the "stupid peasant," who nevertheless shows his inborn intelligence by proclaiming that "If the gods really have selected a Papagena for me, why do I have to exert myself so hard to win her?"

The performance at the Metropolitan of the "Magic Flute" was on the whole successful. The opera was sung in English and generally with good diction, the production had charm, virility, and dignity. With few exceptions, however, the scenery and costumes lacked the colorful and imaginative quality that should go with the "Magic Flute."

IN *Goetterdaemmerung* the performances of the individual artists generally were not so good as in the "Magic Flute." Most successful were the Waltraute of Kerstin Thorberg and the Hagen of Emanuel List, especially in the dark music of his soliloquy of the first act. Erich Leinsdorf had the orchestra rhythmically well in hand but his conducting lacked depth of feeling and breadth. But that is not the main criticism of this and other performances of Wagner. It is an artistic disgrace that Wagner is still presented as he has been for the last decades with disregard for the fundamental principles which he clearly stated. This is a form of musical amateurishness that is inexcusable. Wagner did not write opera—melodies to be sung by singers to the accompaniment of an orchestra. He wrote music dramas in which the words and action are the centers of the performance and in which the orchestra underscores, explains, and contradicts the ideas and moods on the stage and gives them deeper emotional content, thus bringing about a unity of drama and music. For this purpose Wagner created a special combination of speaking and singing which he called the "*Sprechgesang*." He gave his singers training in diction and voice control so that every word could be understood by the audience. There is no reason why this cannot be done in the Metropolitan.

The second problem, that of subordinating the large orchestra to the singers, Wagner solved in Bayreuth by having the orchestral pit built partly under the stage. Since this cannot be done in the Metropolitan, some modern sound damping devices could be utilized or if the Metropolitan is too poor for this, then the orchestra must be much more subdued than it was under Mr. Leinsdorf's direction. And finally we come to the main prerequisite for a satisfying performance: that the music dramas, as well as all operas, be sung in the language of the audience. As long as the snobbish tradition of singing opera in foreign languages prevails, opera can never become a popular art form. Throughout most of Europe operas are sung in the language of the people. Why not then in the United

States? This is especially imperative in the case of Wagner where the hearing and understanding of the text are necessary for a full enjoyment of the music drama. "Tristan and Isolde" was sung successfully in English at the Metropolitan in 1920; why not today? The greatest tribute to the power of Wagner's music lies in the fact that it cannot be killed even by the unauthentic and unsatisfactory dramatic presentations that his music dramas generally receive.

An analysis of the social content and historical background of *Goetterdaemmerung* is beyond the scope of this article and has to be done in connection with the "Ring" as a whole. However, it can be pointed out that Wagner, more than any other composer, reflects the evolution of nineteenth century bourgeois society with all its inherent contradictions. Born in 1813 during the birth pangs of the German bourgeoisie, growing up under the Metternich reaction but with a strong though vague, romantic opposition to it, he participated actively on the side of the Russian anarchist, Bakunin, in the German Revolution of 1848. As a political exile during the next decades, he developed his new art style and wrote some of his epoch-making operas, while intellectually and emotionally he gradually adjusted himself to the status quo, just as during the same period the bourgeoisie, while rapidly expanding economically, made its peace with the monarchy under the threat of the proletarian revolts of the June days. Finally in the decade before his death in 1883, Wagner reached the culmination of his career in *Goetterdaemmerung* and *Parsifal* and in the presentation of all his works under his own direction at the opera house built especially for him by the King of Bavaria. During this time the German bourgeoisie had achieved its long desired unification by means of a servile submission to the Prussian monarch.

Then, like Siegfried, they went out to conquer new worlds. And they did it clothing themselves ideologically in the skins and helmets of the legendary heroes of the Wagnerian stage.

But the very contradictions of the nineteenth century neither Wagner nor the bourgeoisie understood. They became victims of tremendous intellectual and emotional confusion concerning the fundamental problems of man and society—a confusion which only Marx and Engels and their followers could understand and resolve. Never has the destruction of the world of gods and of men been portrayed musically with such grandeur, breadth, and dignity as in the "Dusk of the Gods." But Wagner as a member of his class could sense only eventual destruction. He could and would not see the rise of a new world, not of gods, but of men—of a brotherhood of men as proclaimed, even though naively, in Mozart's "Magic Flute."

As the whole world of the gods and heroes crashes to its doom at the close of the "Dusk of the Gods," the stage is filled by a great mass of people (represented in the Metropolitan by four men and three women) who are left behind but who, as servants and vassals, are mere unimportant spectators without any relation to the great tragedy that has just come to a close. They are thus ignored in the same way Wagner in real life ignored the great masses of the German people. One interpretation of the Finale has been that only after the conniving gods and heroes have been destroyed can the people hope for a new world of freedom. While this is objectively true, there is nothing to show that Wagner felt that way. He was interested mainly in gods—and himself.

Wagner's strength and historical-musical significance lie not in the complex confusion of progressive and reactionary ideas expressed in his writings and dramas, but in the great

driving force and power of his creative musical genius. And just because music is the most abstract of all artistic mediums, the sweeping grandeur, emotional depth, and dignity of his music (though at times theatrical) will long outlast much of the specifically mystic and reactionary philosophy of the text—just as the German people will long outlive the comic-tragic third rate impersonations of Siegfried-Wotan, Fafner, and Alberich by Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels struggling for the possession of and under the curse of the gold. It is significant that with all the Nazi propaganda for Wagner, the "Dusk of the Gods" has never been very popular with the pseudo-gods of fascism, for they probably sense in it their own doom which is now descending upon them in Africa and on the steppes of Soviet Russia.

PAUL ROSAS.

Battered Formulas

And the Ale and Quail Club disappears too soon.

"THE PALM BEACH STORY" begins with a good gag; *Life Begins at Eight-Thirty* ends with a good gag; and between those two laughs this reviewer had to spend upward of three blank and pointless hours watching the screen. Of the two films, the former is the more disappointing, if only because we still expect a good deal from Preston Sturges. For a moment it looks as if we are going to get it. All films must waste several minutes at the start in screen credits—a necessary evil, since screen credits are the one sure way of protecting the rights of authors, musicians, designers, and others. Impatience with this lost time has led many directors to use fantastic devices for pepping up those screen credits. They may be photographed against scenic backgrounds, written in sand and washed out by waves, set up in glaring electric lights, engraved on the pages of an imaginary book—even, in one case, scratched upon dilapidated signboards pointing the way across a fearsome marsh. The net result is to make them ostentatiously silly. Printing them in neat plain letters remains the best way out—and yet, in the introduction of *The Palm Beach Story*, Preston Sturges has introduced a really effective way of brightening them up. His screen credits are photographed against a background of vivid and violent action in pantomime by the film's stars, unexplained and enormously exciting. Claudette Colbert gets gagged and locked in a closet; Claudette gets into a wedding gown and tears off to church; Joel McCrea wrestles with his clothes in a taxi; a nameless maid faints several times in several places. You can hardly wait to find out what it's all about. So the picture never tells you.

Instead, it jumps five years into the future of its newly married pair, and applies Formula II B (Husband Loses Wife, Husband Chases Wife, Husband Catches Wife). Divorce, as a way of solving marital difficulties, is tabooed to the film by the Hays Office;



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therefore, when a film-maker has divorce on his mind (and he often does), he must show it as a foolish mistake, to be undone in the last reel. Certainly *The Palm Beach Story* suffers from no lack of mistakes.

Among them is an organization called the Ale and Quail Club, a group of inebriate hunters traveling to Georgia (where they have quail, among other things) in a private railroad car full of sporting dogs. Much might have been done with this. But the promising club merely gets drunk, starts shooting holes in whiskey bottles, and disappears into the night.

Thus too with one John D. Hackensacker III, a respectable and penny-counting billionaire, haunted by the precepts of his grandfather. Somebody had a good idea in John D.; somebody had no more sense than to hand him over to Rudy Vallee and let him croon 'neath his lady's window. As for the plot, it develops into a duplication of Rosalind Russell's *Take a Letter, Darling* so exact as to be a little scandalous even among formula films. The ending beggars description. Nonsense, to be fun, should be intentional.

"LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHT-THIRTY" uses a formula only slightly less battered—call it IV C with a dash of corn. (Actor Wrecks Career, Actor Recaptures Career, Actor Wrecks Career All Over Again.) Our actor, a whiskery old gent who can play Santa Claus without makeup, has an unexplained craving for strong drink. Such things have been known; but life does not usually accompany its pickled hams with frail, wistful, devoted, crippled daughters who can't marry because they have to nurse Daddy through his hangover. *Life Begins at Eight-Thirty* does, however. Constant moviegoers will be able to fill in the rest for themselves. Suffice it to say that Daddy, given his big chance for a comeback as King Lear, turns up on opening night in a Disgusting Condition. Daughter Gives Up All yet once more; Daddy, over-hearing her renunciation, is inspired to make a final noble gesture—not quite the one you are led to expect, hence a fairly effective curtain line.

Badly translated into screen terms from an unsuccessful Emlyn Williams play, the film unaccountably throws away its one real chance of being interesting—that of letting us see the actor act. One speech from *King Lear* would have revived us enormously; William Shakespeare, however, is kept firmly in the background.

What style and glitter the film does possess are entirely due to Monty Woolley's performance as the broken-down actor. Acid as a Dorothy Thompson comment on Clare Luce, Mr. Woolley saves the role from the lachrymose tediousness with which it is written. He is a conscious scoundrel, a slyly unregenerate souse—he makes no pretenses, even to himself. There is a great gap between Woolley and the film; his assurance is such that you cannot imagine him helplessly drunk, cannot imagine him noble and melting, cer-

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tainly cannot imagine him playing the pitiful tragedy of Lear with any sort of understanding. But Mr. Woolley is much better than the film; so who cares?

RECENT Hollywood news, good and bad, includes the denial by Harry Scherman, in response to the OWI's question, of "any intention of producing" a remake of *Birth of a Nation*; and new censorship regulations governing the export of films. Gangster films are among those barred. No one is likely to weep about that. More serious, however, is the decision barring export of any film showing riots, lynchings, and "too vivid portrayal of underprivileged groups such as sharecroppers or slum dwellers." There seems no valid reason why we should deny that such things exist, either to ourselves or our neighbors; and what Hollywood cannot export to the foreign market it is not likely to film, so that our films may shortly resume the ostrich posture. Just now, when the film industry is gaining new consciousness of its function as a force for social improvement, such taboos come as a severe setback.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

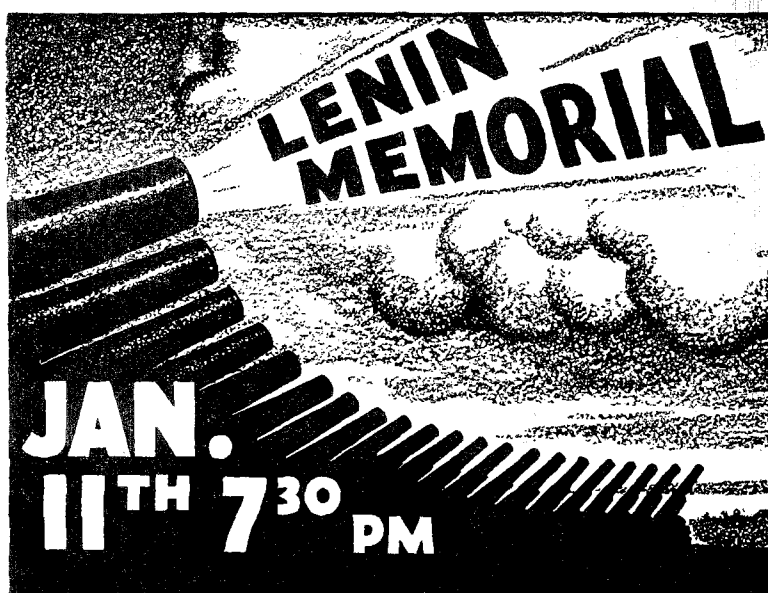
Weep for the Willow

WHEN Mara Sutro was born her father planted a weeping willow tree. When her sister Bessie was born, he planted an apple. One stands and weeps; one bears fruit. This is John Patrick's "symbol" for the essential difference in temperament and fate that awaits his two sisters in *The Willow and I*. It's a cheap symbol, and a cheap play.

Sister Bessie, the luscious, steals Mara's fiance from her on her wedding day, by threatening to take her own life. They grapple for the pistol, it goes off, and sister Mara, thinking she has killed her sister (who also loves the fiance), flies from reality into amnesia. It lasts for twenty years. And during those twenty years sister Bessie marries the fiance, has a son, loses her husband to death, sees her son grow up and marry, produce a son, and lose his own wife.

Then sister Mara's memory returns; and she finds herself an old woman, cheated of her life. Sister Bessie's guilty conscience has forced her to care for the helpless Mara all these years, but she has always hated her, and now tries again to cheat her of her memories by convincing her that her fiance forgot her (Mara) in the love Bessie gave him. It's all very sad—and all very sleazy. And it's accompanied by the expected thunder storms, pattering rain, dimly lit rooms, gloomy philosophy, and cheap optimism. You will not have to worry about seeing it; it will probably vanish before you read these words. More's the pity that Martha Scott (who revealed such talent in *Our Town*) is wasted on this concoction. Miss Scott can't do a thing with it, though she attempts to give dignity to the ludicrous.

ALVAH BESSIE.



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